

# Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting

to be held at the Council Chamber, 32 Civic Drive, Greensborough  
on Tuesday 13 May 2025 commencing at 7:00 PM.

## Attachments

**Carl Cowie**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

Thursday 8 May 2025

Distribution: Public

Civic Drive, Greensborough  
PO Box 476, Greensborough 3088  
Telephone 9433 3111  
Facsimile 9433 3777  
Website [www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au](http://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au)  
Email [nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)

## Nillumbik Shire Council

---

**Attachments**

---

**COM.001/25 Confirmation of Minutes Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held Tuesday 8 April 2025**

|              |  |   |
|--------------|--|---|
| Attachment 1 | Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 8 April 2025..... | 1 |
|--------------|--|---|

**PCC.003/25 Proposal to rename a section of Duffs Road, Panton Hill to Welton View**

|              |  |    |
|--------------|--|----|
| Attachment 1 | Plan of Duffs Road .....               | 9  |
| Attachment 2 | Vicmap Plan of Duffs Road .....        | 11 |
| Attachment 3 | Submissions - Renaming Duffs Road..... | 13 |

**PCC.004/25 Draft Budget 2025-2026 Submissions**

|              |   |    |
|--------------|---|----|
| Attachment 1 | Attachment 1 - 2025-2026 Submissions_Redacted ..... | 17 |
|--------------|---|----|

**PCC.005/25 Domestic Animal Management Plan - Phase 2 Community Engagement**

|              |  |    |
|--------------|--|----|
| Attachment 1 | Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029..... | 27 |
| Attachment 2 | Community Engagement Report – Phase 2 .....          | 69 |
| Attachment 3 | Community Engagement Report - Phase 1 .....          | 85 |
| Attachment 4 | Written submissions - Redacted.....                  | 99 |



- COM.001/25      Confirmation of Minutes Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held Tuesday 8 April 2025
- Attachment 1.   Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 8 April 2025

# Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting

held at the Council Chamber, 32 Civic Drive, Greensborough  
on Tuesday 8 April 2025 commencing at 7:00 PM.

## Minutes

**Carl Cowie**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

Friday 11 April March 2025

Distribution: Public

Civic Drive, Greensborough  
PO Box 476, Greensborough 3088  
Telephone      9433 3111  
Facsimile      9433 3777  
Website      [www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au](http://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au)  
Email      [nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)



**COM.001/25      Confirmation of Minutes Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held Tuesday 8 April 2025**

**Attachment 1.    Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 8 April 2025**

**Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting Minutes**

**8 April 2025**

**Nillumbik Shire Council**

---

| <b>Contents</b> |  |          |
|-----------------|--|----------|
| <hr/>           |  |          |
| <b>1.</b>       | <b>Welcome by the Chair</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| <b>2.</b>       | <b>Acknowledgement of Country</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| <b>3</b>        | <b>Apologies/Leave of Absence</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| <b>4</b>        | <b>Declarations of conflict of interest</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| <b>5.</b>       | <b>Confirmation of Minutes</b>   | <b>2</b> |
|                 | COM.001/25    Confirmation of Minutes Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held Tuesday 11 March 2025 | 2        |
| <b>6.</b>       | <b>Officers' reports</b>   | <b>3</b> |
|                 | <b>Consultation Matters</b>  |          |
|                 | PCC.002/25    Proposed sale of Council land at 311A Yan Yean Road, Plenty                                    | 3        |
| <b>7.</b>       | <b>Supplementary and urgent business</b>   | <b>5</b> |
| <b>8.</b>       | <b>Confidential reports</b>  | <b>5</b> |
| <b>9.</b>       | <b>Close of Meeting</b>  | <b>5</b> |

**Nillumbik Shire Council**

**Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held  
Tuesday 8 April 2025. The meeting commenced at 7:01 PM.**

---

**Councillors present:**

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Cr John Dumaresq | Wingrove Ward <b>(Mayor)</b>                             |
| Cr Grant Brooker | Blue Lake Ward <b>(Chairperson Consultation Matters)</b> |
| Cr Kelly Joy     | Edendale Ward  |
| Cr Peter Perkins | Ellis Ward <b>(Chairperson Planning Matters)</b>         |
| Cr Kate McKay    | Swipers Gully Ward                                       |

**Officers in attendance:**

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Carl Cowie        | Chief Executive Officer                                  |
| Melika Sukunda    | Acting Chief Operating Officer                           |
| Blaga Naumoski    | Director Governance, Communications and Community Safety |
| Frank Vassilacos  | Director Planning, Environment and Strategy              |
| Jeremy Livingston | Director Culture and Performance                         |
| Daniel Tarquinio  | Manager Information Technology                           |
| Renae Ahern       | Manager Planning and Environmental Health                |
| Katia Croce       | Manager Governance and Property                          |
| Sarah Shehata     | Acting Coordinator Strategic Planning                    |

---

**1. Welcome by the Chair**

**2. Acknowledgement of Country**

Acknowledgement of Country was read by the Chairperson Consultation Matters Cr Grant Brooker.

**3. Apologies/Leave of Absence**

Cr Naomi Joiner and Cr Kim Cope had requested a leave of absence for this Planning and Consultation Committee meeting.

**Committee Resolution**

**MOVED: Cr Peter Perkins**

**SECONDED: Cr John Dumaresq**

**That** the Committee (acting under delegation from Council) grant Cr Naomi Joiner's and Cr Kim Cope's leave of absence.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**4. Declarations of conflict of interest**

Nil

**COM.001/25 Confirmation of Minutes Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held Tuesday 8 April 2025**

**Attachment 1. Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 8 April 2025**

**Planning and Consultation Committee Minutes**

**8 April 2025**

**5. Confirmation of Minutes**

**COM.001/25 Confirmation of Minutes Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held Tuesday 11 March 2025**

---

Confirmation of the Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 11 March 2025.

|                             |
|-----------------------------|
| <b>Committee Resolution</b> |
|-----------------------------|

**MOVED: Cr Kate McKay**

**SECONDED: Cr Kelly Joy**

**That** the Committee (acting under delegation from Council) confirms the Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 11 March 2025 (**Attachment 1**).

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Planning and Consultation Committee Minutes

8 April 2025

6. Officers' reports

PCC.002/25 Proposed sale of Council land at 311A Yan Yean Road, Plenty

---

Item: Consultation Matter

Distribution: Public

Manager: Blaga Naumoski, Director Governance, Communications and Community Safety

Author: Natalie Campion, Coordinator Property

Summary

At its Council Meeting on 25 February 2025, Council endorsed to commence the statutory procedures in accordance with section 114 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), to give public notice and undertake a community engagement process in regard to the proposed sale of the land known as 311A Yan Yean Road, Plenty, being the land contained in Certificate of Title Volume 11371 Folio 358 and shown as Reserve 1 on Plan of Subdivision PS416599M on the plan in **Attachment 1 (Reserve)**, subject to terms outlined in this Report.

In accordance with the Act, Council also resolved to consider any submissions received on the proposed sale of the Reserve at a Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting following the conclusion of the community engagement period and prior to making any final decision on whether to proceed with the sale of the Reserve.

Community consultation occurred on the proposal to sell the Reserve between Friday 28 February to Friday 28 March 2025.

This report is to consider any submission received in respect of the proposed sale of the Reserve.

Council received no written submissions on the proposal to sell the Reserve known as 311A Yan Yean Road, Plenty.

**Committee Resolution**

**MOVED:** Cr Peter Perkins

**SECONDED:** Cr Kate McKay

**That** the Committee (acting under delegation from Council):

1. In accordance with section 114 of the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act), notes that no written submissions were received in response to Council's public notice and community engagement process in regard to the proposed sale of the land known as 311A Yan Yean Road, Plenty, being the land contained in Certificate of Title Volume 11371 Folio 358 and shown as Reserve 1 on Plan of Subdivision PS416599M on the plan in **Attachment 1 (Reserve)**.

The Reserve is proposed to be sold by private treaty to the adjoining landowner of 311 Yan Yean Road, Plenty (**Adjoining Owner**) for the current market value of \$10,000 plus GST.

The proposed sale of the Reserve will be conditional on:

COM.001/25 Confirmation of Minutes Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held Tuesday 8 April 2025

Attachment 1. Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 8 April 2025

Planning and Consultation Committee Minutes

8 April 2025

**6. Consultation Matters**

**PCC.002/25 Proposed sale of Council land at 311A Yan Yean Road, Plenty**

---

- a) Council removing the reserve status from the land under section 24A of the *Subdivision Act 1988*;
  - b) the Adjoining Owner:
    - i) consolidating the Reserve with the balance of the land at 311 Yan Yean Road, Plenty; and
    - ii) constructing a new fence on the boundary of the Reserve and the adjoining road reserve, within 6 months after the Settlement Date; and
  - c) the Adjoining Owner paying all of Council's costs incurred in connection with the removal of the reserve status of the Reserve and the sale of land.
2. Requests a further report be presented to Council on 27 May 2025 to make a final decision on whether to proceed with the sale of the Reserve.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**COM.001/25      Confirmation of Minutes Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held Tuesday 8 April 2025**

**Attachment 1.    Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 8 April 2025**

**Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting Minutes**

**8 April 2025**

**7.    Supplementary and urgent business**

Nil

**8.    Confidential reports**

Nil

**9.    Close of Meeting**

The meeting closed at 7.06pm.

Confirmed: \_\_\_\_\_

Cr \_\_\_\_\_, Chairperson Consultation Matters

**COM.001/25**      **Confirmation of Minutes Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held Tuesday 8 April 2025**  
**Attachment 1.**   **Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 8 April 2025**

THIS PAGE WAS LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK



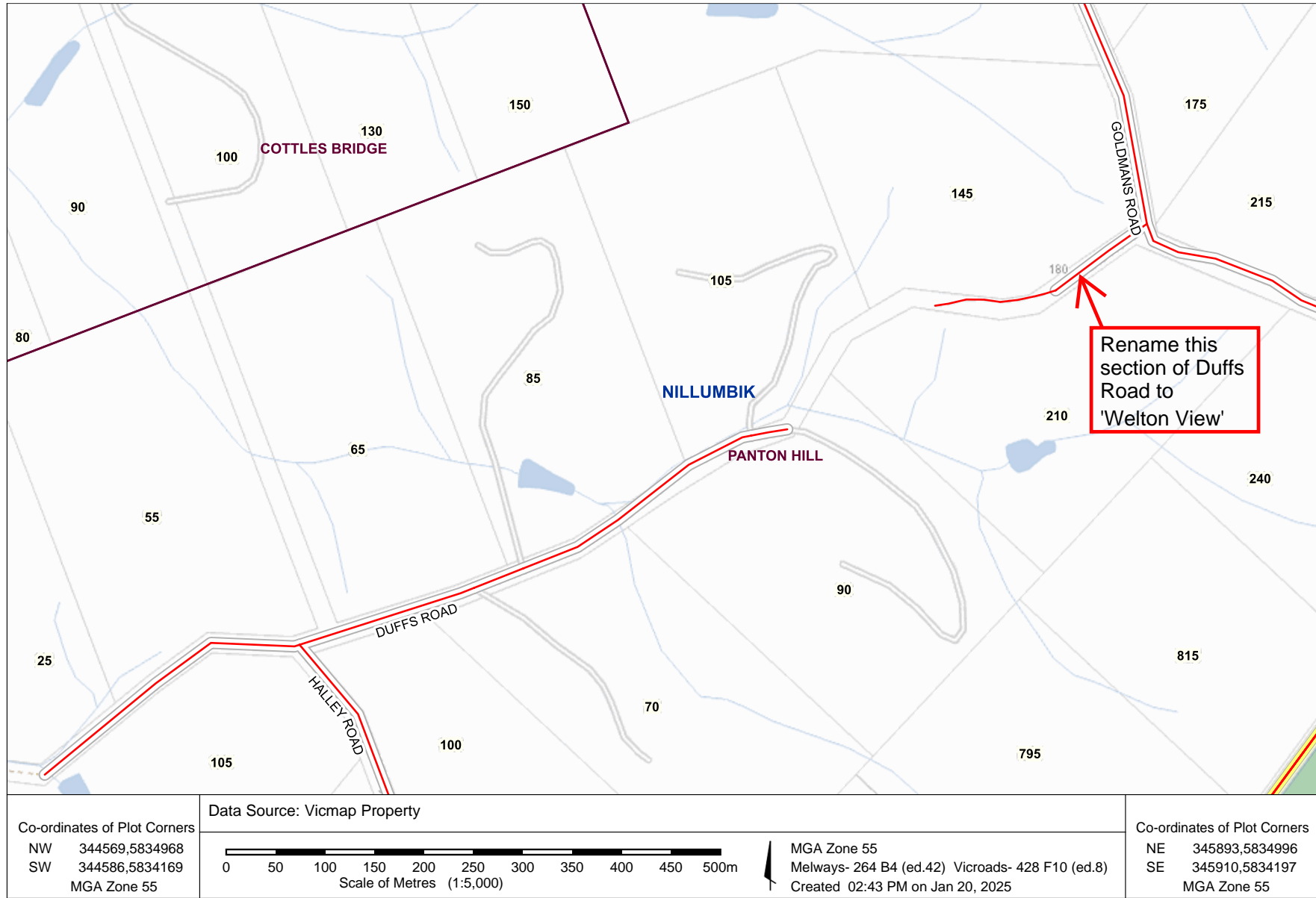


**PCC.003/25      Proposal to rename a section of Duffs Road, Panton Hill to Welton View**

**Attachment 1.   Plan of Duffs Road**

THIS PAGE WAS LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK





WARNING: No warranty is given as to the accuracy or completeness of this map. Dimensions are approximate. For property dimensions, undertake a Title search.

THIS PAGE WAS LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

## Proposal to rename a section of Duffs Road, Pantan Hill to Welton View

| ID   | Q1. Are you supportive of renaming a section of Duffs Road, Pantan Hill to |    | Q2. Provide any further comments on your response.  | Q3. Please explain why you believe the name does not comply with any of the general principles in the Naming Rules for Places Victoria 2022 |
|------|--|----|---|---|
|      | Yes  | No |   |   |
| 1035 | 1  |    |   |   |
| 1036 | 1  |    |   |   |
| 1037 | 1  |    |   |   |
| 1038 | 1  |    | It's a good idea to avoid confusion and I'm happy to see that a road will be named after a significant woman in the area. |   |
| 1046 | 1  |    | it is a good idea   |   |
| 1047 | 1  |    | Fantastic for the Family rich history in the naming and also for emergency services                                       |   |
| 1048 | 1  |    |   |   |
| 1049 |  | 1  |   | instead naming the road 'Woi-wurrung' reflects the true history   |
| 1051 | 1  |    | Lots of cars enter as GPS has confusion   |   |
| 1053 | 1  |    |   |   |
| 1159 | 1  |    |   |   |
| 1160 | 1  |    |   |   |
| 1163 | 1  |    |   |   |
| 1164 | 1  |    |   |   |
| 1171 | 1  |    |   |   |
| 1172 | 1  |    | will stop traffic getting lost at the wrong end of Duffs Rd   |   |

## Attachment 3. Submissions – Renaming Duffs Road

| ID   | Q1. Are you supportive of renaming a section of Duffs Road, Panton Hill to |    | Q2. Provide any further comments on your response.  | Q3. Please explain why you believe the name does not comply with any of the general principles in the Naming Rules for Places Victoria 2022 |
|------|--|----|---|---|
|      | Yes  | No |   |   |
| 1207 | 1  |    | I'm happy to being here, when you can get the local road as they you have to expand the changeover from Duffs Road Panton Hill to Welton View under proposed as well. |   |
| 1241 | 1  |    |   |   |
| 1270 | 1  |    |   |   |
| 1271 | 1  |    | the weltons spent many decades on this property and were a crucial part of the community - this would be a welcomed and deserving tribute.                            |   |
| 1272 | 1  |    |   |   |
| 1273 | 1  |    | Think it is a great honour for the Welton family  |   |
| 1274 | 1  |    |   |   |
| 1275 | 1  |    |   |   |
| 1276 | 1  |    |   |   |
| 1277 | 1  |    |   |   |
| 1278 | 1  |    |   |   |

## Attachment 3. Submissions – Renaming Duffs Road

| ID   | Q1. Are you supportive of renaming a section of Duffs Road, Panton Hill to |    | Q2. Provide any further comments on your response.   | Q3. Please explain why you believe the name does not comply with any of the general principles in the Naming Rules for Places Victoria 2022 |
|------|--|----|--|---|
|      | Yes  | No |  |   |
| 1279 | 1  |    | <p>My name is [REDACTED] I am the Grandson of [REDACTED] Welton who have lived on Duffs Road Panton hill since 1954. Their property was my childhood home, in the early 1990's [REDACTED] had 5 grandchildren almost permanently in their care.</p> <p>The tired old fibre-cement house that stands there today was build by [REDACTED] by hand, 71 years ago using recycled materials from demolition sites and timber from trees off the property.</p> <p>For [REDACTED] 6 children, 11 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren and 2 great-great-grandchildren their home in Panton Hill is place of loving memories that will remain with us all for the rest of our lives. It will always be our home.</p> <p>I want to thank Nillumbik council for considering the renaming of Duffs Rd to Welton Views in my grandmothers honour. This is a kind and fitting gesture that will have a lasting impact on [REDACTED] [REDACTED] legacy.</p> |   |

## Attachment 3. Submissions – Renaming Duffs Road

| ID           | Q1. Are you supportive of renaming a section of Duffs Road, Panton Hill to |          | Q2. Provide any further comments on your response.  | Q3. Please explain why you believe the name does not comply with any of the general principles in the Naming Rules for Places Victoria 2022 |
|--------------|--|----------|---|---|
|              | Yes  | No       |   |   |
| 1280         | 1  |          |   |   |
| 1282         | 1  |          |   |   |
| 1283         | 1  |          |   |   |
| 1285         | 1  |          | Having two ends of "Duffs Road" that don't meet in the middle has always been a problem, and in the age of GPS software has only become more of one. The two parts of "Duffs Road" should absolutely have two different names to avoid confusion for visitors and delivery drivers or crews of emergency vehicles. Re-naming the Goldmans Road end after Mrs [REDACTED] Welton is a wonderful proposal as she lived on that section of "Duffs Road" and was a lovely part of the local Panton Hill (and wider) community over many decades. |   |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>31</b>  | <b>1</b> |   |   |



| Nillumbik Shire Council – Public submissions to the Draft Budget 2025-2026   |   |
|--|---|
| Submitter and Key Points   | Officer Response  |
| <p>1. [REDACTED]</p> <p>I am very disappointed no money is earmarked for removal of the Diamond Creek level crossing. Our town comes to a standstill with the ever increasing number of often near empty trains bringing traffic to a halt. So much money goes into sports and playgrounds yet this infrastructure issue is repeatedly ignored by all.</p>   | <p>While recognising that there would be significant positive outcomes to level crossing removal across the Shire, particularly within Diamond Creek, the decision to remove the crossing and the project itself fall outside the control of Council. This responsibility is with the State Government's Level Crossing Removal Authority (LXRA). Whilst the LXRA have identified 110 crossings to be removed across Melbourne, unfortunately Diamond Creek does not feature as a priority.</p> <p>Council will continue explore opportunities to improve traffic flow around the Shire and advocate for these where they fall outside of Council's authority.</p> <p>In the draft 2025/2026 budget, Council is proposing to spend \$15.67 million across capital works on community infrastructure, including \$4.81 million on roads, traffic management, drainage, footpaths and trails to maintain and improve our community's ability to travel around the Shire, and will continue to advocate for greater public transport availability and access across our suburbs.</p>   |
| <p>2. [REDACTED]</p> <p>Looks to be on track</p>   | <p>Submission noted.</p>  |
| <p>3. [REDACTED]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is estimated that you will have a budget surplus of \$4.9 million . Why then are you planning to borrow another \$2.1 million which will have an interest cost ??</li> <li>The new medical hospital that was to be built. I understand that this was approved yet there has been no physical activity. When might we expect this facility to be finished?</li> <li>The second was the BMX facility that should have been completed by now just off allendale rd . When will this project start and be completed?</li> <li>And finally what is the hold up with the toilet facilities in Alister park being opened?</li> </ul>   | <p>The surplus quoted in the Income Statement is prepared in compliance with Australian Accounting Standards. The accounting surplus includes capital grants and capital contributions, while the corresponding expenditure is recognised in the Statement of Capital Works. The budgeted borrowings have been proposed to fund capital works projects.</p> <p>The Eltham Area Community Hospital is a State Government project on State Government owned land. Council was not involved in the decision made to situate the hospital at this location. Any questions or concern about the hospital should be directed to the Victorian Health Building Authority at <a href="mailto:communityhospitals@health.vic.gov.au">communityhospitals@health.vic.gov.au</a>.</p> <p>At the time of writing this report, Diamond Creek BMX project has to be re-located. Following extensive investigations into both Cultural Heritage Management and flood assessments, the original site was found to be unfeasible and a new site has had to be found. Planning and development investigations are underway on determining the suitability a new site within close proximity to the original site. Once a suitable site is confirmed, Council will then be briefed on the new location and new project timelines before being asked to approve a public consultation process. Until such time that the new location for the project is approved, new start and completion timeframes cannot be provided. It is expected that new project timelines will be able to be provided as part of the public consultation process.</p> <p>The opening of the Alistair Knox Park Changing Places and amenities facility has been delayed largely due to contaminated soils on site and significant delays encountered for service connections. The new facility is scheduled to be operational at the beginning of May.</p> |
| <p>4. [REDACTED]</p> <p>Good morning, I'd like to see Dingley Dell Road , North Warrandyte sealed as part of the unsealed roads policy. It sits at number three on the list of roads identified as needing attention. The condition of the road has continued to deteriorate, the culvert drains are no longer fit for purpose and the run off in heavy rain makes the road almost impossible to drive on and causes damage to properties. The grading schedule is not frequent enough to maintain the road and the response times after a rain event often run into weeks. Furthermore those unfamiliar to the road (tradies and delivery drivers ) often end up in the drains and need to be towed out. Council cars have also gotten stuck in the drains and have required a tow. In the event of a speedy evacuation for a fire event, it is highly likely a car will come off the road which will result in a death or serious injury. Several votes have been held for a special charge scheme, but fail owing to the large cost on the residents. It is no longer a road just used by residents it has become a thoroughfare and as such needs an urgent upgrade.</p> | <p>All unsealed roads in the Shire have been assessed against Council's Unsealed Roads Improvement Prioritisation Policy (June 2024). The Unsealed Roads Priority List (December 2024) shows the results of the assessment and is available on Council's website.</p> <p>Dingley Dell Road received a score of 26 and is the third project on the list. The road received a relatively high score against many criteria, including criteria associated with traffic volume, through traffic use, road standard and community safety.</p> <p>Youngs Road is the first project on the list and has been budgeted for road sealing in 2024/2025. Cassells Road, which is the second project on the list, has been included in the draft budget for road sealing in 2025/2026. Dingley Dell Road may be considered for funding in 2026/2027 or thereafter, dependent on the availability of funding and competing funding demands.</p>  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>5. [REDACTED]</p> <p>I recommend consulting with the Victorian Government to reallocate the \$2 million intended for the “Edendale / Eltham Dog Park Trail Connection ” to a more critical infrastructure project: a safe formal pedestrian rail crossing between Coolabah Reserve and the Eltham North Adventure Playground.</p>   | <p>Council officers are in current dialogue with the Department of Transport and Planning to discuss the feasibility of the proposed pedestrian railway crossing at Coolabah Reserve, including funding opportunities to deliver on this project.</p>  |
| <p>6. [REDACTED]</p> <p>May I ask why is it necessary to increase the council rates notice every year given that Nillumbik residents are paying the second highest rates charge in Victoria. What is the council doing to gain additional revenue and halt additional spending so that the Nillumbik residents in future are paying council rates closer to the mid table in terms of average council rates.</p>   | <p>Council levies rates and charges under the Local Government Act 1989 in order to fund, deliver, and maintain essential community infrastructure and services. The increase to rates is in compliance with the rate-capping framework established by the Victorian State Government and is reflective of the continued provision of services, which have been maintained at existing levels, and capital works program delivery. Council continues to pursue grant opportunities and review available revenue streams.</p>   |
| <p>7. [REDACTED]</p> <p><u>Assumption of Zero Growth</u></p> <p>The budget is based on a primary assumption of zero growth in NSC service capacity, and the 3.00% increase in rates is caused by cost increases (inflation) alone. There appears to be no or minimal allowance for any housing/rateable property growth which would affect forecast revenues and expenditure through increased demand for services. This shortcoming gives an inaccurate and potentially misleading view of the budget projections and should be addressed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does NSC plan to provide services and infrastructure to meet either current growth in dwellings, or the State government housing target of 6,500 new dwellings by 2051, and why is this not reflected in the budget and discussed in the assumptions?</li> <li>Why aren't risks to Council's future financial health caused by growth uncertainties explored in the budget?</li> </ul> <p><u>Level of Detail on Expenditure</u></p> <p>There is insufficient detail in the Section 2, Service Area expenditure/revenue/net cost tables to ascertain where the funds are to be directed, especially for large expenditure items.</p> <p>In particular, we note the budget introduction refers to 'budget allocations to multiple climate and biodiversity initiatives'. We also note an increase in expenditure of some \$1.2 million or 16.8% in Parks and Reserves Maintenance. However, this large service area includes parks, sportsgrounds, conservation reserves, street trees and roadsides, and it is impossible to see where additional funding is planned. Similarly, there is no detail under the Service Area for Environment and Conservation, with a \$0.2 million or 16.5% funding increase.</p> <p>We request further detailed information be made openly available by NSC.</p> <p><u>Expenditure for Environment, Biodiversity and the Green Wedge</u></p> <p>While there appears to be an increase in expenditure for Parks and Reserves Maintenance and Environment and Conversation, there is no specific mention of the critical actions or expenditure relating to the Green Wedge Management Plan 2019, the Biodiversity Strategy 2024 or the Urban Tree Canopy Strategy 2024-2040. Specific mention and budget allocations to these strategies are necessary.</p> <p><u>Service Performance Outcome Indicators</u></p> <p>There are no service performance outcome measures relating to environment, biodiversity and climate action, despite monitoring and outcome performance being integral to commitments in these various strategies. Appropriate service performance outcome indicators are requested for these items.</p> <p><u>Capital Replacements and Renewals</u></p> <p>Allocation of funds to capital replacements and renewals is below desired levels of funding over the forecast 10-year period. Council could potentially fund some of this shortfall through its operating surpluses and increasing cash reserves to maintain infrastructure and facilities to their required service levels.</p> <p>We ask: Does our community want Council to have cash in the bank or roads with fewer potholes and facilities that are safe? We certainly do.</p> | <p>Currently, the budget is modelled on an increase of 130 properties per year, which is below the Government led housing targets, however it is reflective of historical and anticipated growth under non-accelerated circumstances.</p> <p>For this budget cycle a conservative approach has been taken, waiting for further understanding on the implications of these targets, as at a very high level, the additional (new) rates income will offset (or at least partly offset) any additional expenditure/ investment into infrastructure.</p> <p>The Budget document is a statutory document prepared in line with the Local Government Model Budget and is prepared in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements and better practice. Risks and uncertainties are explored within the modelling processes undertaken annually.</p> <p>Service performance indicators are developed and set by Local Government Victoria. There are no indicators currently directly linked to environment, biodiversity or climate action outcomes planned for the 2025/2026 reporting period. All full listing of indicators can be found on the “Know Your Council” website, <a href="http://www.vic.gov.au/know-your-council">www.vic.gov.au/know-your-council</a></p> <p>The surplus quoted in the Income Statement is prepared in compliance with Australian Accounting Standards. The accounting surplus includes capital grants and capital contributions, while the corresponding expenditure is recognised in the Statement of Capital Works rather than in the Income Statement.</p> <p>Each year Council considers the capital works program and prioritisation of projects within the constrained financial environment. Council has made strategic and informed decisions surrounding the allocation of capital works programming for the next financial year, which includes considerations of the underlying renewal requirements of local community infrastructure.</p> |

8. [REDACTED]

I have three major questions regarding the draft 2025-2026 budget which appears to have slashed funding to support for our large and ageing community and for children and families.

In summary, my three questions are as follows:

- Q 1.** What is the justification for the huge reduction (93%) in Age and family services? (p45)  
**Q 2.** How will State and Federal Government grants (p41) for these services be spent?  
**Q 3.** What became of Council's Strategic Objective for Community and Connection in 2024-2025?

**Q 1.** Re 4.1.10 p 45 -Other expenses "*Expenses are forecast to decrease by 14.53% (\$1.06 million) mainly as a result of reductions in aged and family services related expenditure* "

**What is the justification** for this decrease in Aged and family services?

2024-2025 \$444,000

2025-2026 \$ 33,000

**Q 2.** 4.14 Grants p41

**Commonwealth Government**

Operating grants

**Aged Care**

2024-2025 \$133,000

20245-2026 \$137,000

**Family and Children**

2024-2025 \$237,000

2025-2026 \$264,000

**Non-recurrent**

2024-2025 \$307,000

**State Government**

2024-2025. \$473,000

2025-2026 \$300,000

**Non recurrent**

2024-2025 \$390,000

Total Grants Received in 2024-2025 for Aged and family services.

Aged \$133,000 plus Family and Children \$1,100,000 = \$1,233,000

Council budget 2024-2025 was \$444,000.

**What happened to the remaining \$777,000 in State and Commonwealth Grants?**

2025-2026 Grants

Aged \$137,000 plus Family and Children \$264,000 (State) plus \$300,000 (Comm)= \$701,000

BUT Council draft Budget 2025-2026 has combined Aged and family services \$33,000

What is happening to the remaining \$688,000 grant money allocated for this purpose?

ALSO (See **Other Services**) funded by large recurrent grants e.g. Maternal and Child Health \$831,000 (2024-2025); 205-2026 \$661,000 (2025-2026) are not accounted for. How will these funds be spent?

**Q 3.** What was the outcome of Council's 2024-2025 budget objective to support Nillumbik's ageing community? If achieved, how was the money spent? ***Stated Strategic objective: Community and Connection Community health and wellbeing, support for Nillumbik's ageing community (\$1.86 million)*** .

Aged and Family Services expenditure within Council's budget is spread across wages, contracts and materials, and other expenditure. The 2025/2026 budget document compares the 2024/2025 forecast versus the 2025/2026 budget allocation. The decrease in the Other Expenditure component of the Aged and Family Services budget, which is the figure referred to, is due to the year-end forecast including unspent grants from prior year that were brought forward into 2024/2025 financial year.

Nillumbik promotes and supports our ageing community with a focus on the overall health, wellbeing and independence of individuals, families and community groups through services, programs, lifelong learning opportunities, infrastructure and initiatives.



|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><a href="https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/Council/News-and-publications/Latest-news/Budget-focuses-on-liveability-in-Green-Wedge-Shire">https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/Council/News-and-publications/Latest-news/Budget-focuses-on-liveability-in-Green-Wedge-Shire</a> “</p> <p>The above budget-related questions relate to large sums of money which may affect the lives of many community members who are entitled to answers. More clarity is needed about how funding is allocated and more budget details to improve ratepayers’ understanding and participation.</p> <p>██████████</p> <p>████████████████████</p>  |  |
| <p>9. ██████████</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft budget 2025-26.</p> <p><u>Major initiatives:</u> I am delighted to see the inclusion of the six major initiatives within the Sustainable and Resilient Theme. All of these are important pieces of work which will contribute to our commitment to addressing climate change and protect and enhance biodiversity, as outlined in the Climate Action Plan and the Biodiversity Strategy.</p> <p>Developing the specific outcomes and indicators to demonstrate real progress towards our climate change and biodiversity goals will be a critical next step to ensure these initiatives bring about meaningful changes.</p> <p><u>Staffing</u> I note that the FTE across all Units is predicted to be stable across the next ten years, if this remains the case it is difficult to see how the 22 new actions described in the Biodiversity Strategy Year 1 2024-25 implementation plan, can be achieved. Whilst some redirection may be possible, in general, new initiatives will require new resources, particularly in light of the fact that capacity to continue current and ongoing actions already seems stretched.</p> <p>Many of the new actions in the current (2024-25) biodiversity strategy implementation plan have not yet commenced or achieved their intended outcomes, so no doubt will roll over into the 2025-26, and subsequent budget years. Without increasing resources to undertake these actions it is likely that they will be little more than aspirational intentions. Understanding that there is no new money (other than some potential grants) I suggest that Council adopt a policy of reviewing all vacancies arising in all Units and allocate FTE to priorities arising from the Council plan and other key Strategies such as the Climate Action plan and the Biodiversity Strategy ; to include allocation to a different Unit.</p> <p>Whilst it may be challenging to predict where specific opportunities will arise at this point of budget development, this may be one of the few ways that resources can be made available to resource the stated intentions. This approach, although longer term, would also avoid the need to offer expensive redundancies and avoid the anxiety, disruption and waste that accompanies restructure.</p> <p><u>External Grants</u> I would also like to suggest Council exercise extreme caution when accepting external funding that requires a “matched” Council spend. Whilst such opportunities may seem attractive, and be difficult to refuse, they are often infrastructure related and therefore expensive, escalate as they are implemented and do not necessarily reflect community wide priorities. A further, and very significant downside is that they take scarce resources from other priority spends.</p> <p><u>New Builds</u> In respect of construction, Council should not commit to any new building construction in this current term. Construction costs for new builds are extremely high and usually “blow out”, creating the same impact as stated above, ie resources have to be diverted from other priorities to complete a build, as once it is started it is a complete waste of the money if it cannot be finished. I would rather see Council maintain and possibly undertake small expansions or upgrades to the buildings it already has.</p> <p><u>Service Performance Outcome Indicators</u> Recognising that “Council is required by legislation to identify major initiatives and service performance outcome indicators in the Budget and report against them in the Annual Report to support transparency and accountability.” Pg 12, it is difficult to understand the rationale for the selection of service performance outcome indicators that have been chosen. For none of the four themes areas do they provide a measure of the full range of identified responsibilities in that theme, and some of the choices are quite perplexing For example: • Community and Connection: despite a wide range of services being listed here, service performance data is only required for MCH and library usage • Place and space: again, with the wide range of service areas only three areas have identified service performance outcome indicators and in the case of leisure facilities and services it only relates to use of aquatic facilities, not even</p> | <p>Council has dedicated Environment team who support the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy. Council continues to explore grant opportunities in order to facilitate temporary additional EFTs, although this is not something we can anticipate or budget for. Council does review all vacancies arising to ensure resources are allocated appropriately.</p> <p>Council reviews each grant opportunity on the basis of service and/or infrastructure needs and priorities. All opportunities, both fully funded and those requiring co-contributions are assessed against parameters such as existing asset condition, required service levels, user demand, industry standards, available funding and the existing capital works program or service provision. Co-contribution grants are considered where the opportunity provides significant value to both Council and the community and is financially sustainable.</p> <p>Likewise, new builds are only ever considered when either an existing facility can no longer provide the required level of service for which it was intended or there is no facility providing a service in that area which the community require. Prior to any new build being considered, an existing facility would first be fully assessed to determine whether the desired outcome in terms of service levels and safety can be achieved through an expansion or upgrade of that facility.</p> <p>Service performance indicators are developed and set by Local Government Victoria as part of the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF). The indicators in the Budget are those audited by the Victorian Auditor-General’s Office, and are not the full suite of performance indicators, as there are others from the LGPRF and the Council Plan that are reported in the annual report each year. There are currently no indicators directly linked to environment, biodiversity or climate action outcomes planned for the 2025/2026 reporting period. All full listing of indicators can be found on the “Know Your Council” website, <a href="https://www.knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au">Know Your Council   vic.gov.au</a>.</p> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>the full range of the leisure services, this seems strange. • Sustainable and resilient – the only data required relates to waste collection, important yes, but not comprehensive. • Responsible and accountable – reporting on the three indicators chosen for this theme do not provide the community with a coherent sense of a responsible and accountable Council . At the very minimum an indicator relating to complaints management and outcomes should be included. Having such a limited range of service performance outcome indicators, with no clear rationale for the selections, does not support transparency and accountability, rather it does the opposite. This approach causes the reader to question why those particular services and indicators have been selected, and wonder how accountability is to be demonstrated for the others. Do the choices only reflect easily reported or required targets? Understanding too that performance indicators for the major initiatives are yet to be determined, so this comment does not apply to the indicators for these.</p>   |  |
| <p>10. [REDACTED]</p> <p>Nillumbik Draft Budget 2025–26 Comments</p> <p>[REDACTED] Ecologist and Conservation Teacher</p> <p>It's very difficult to understand how much funding biodiversity and reserve management actually receive. Presumably, conservation matters are deliberately lumped into broader categories.</p> <p>For example, under Nillumbik rates spending, "conservation management" is included within the category Environment, Parks &amp; Open Space. But open space is hardly conservation — in fact, it's often the direct opposite. Parks can also include playgrounds and dog parks, which are not conservation-focused either.</p> <p>So, from the \$14.89 out of every \$100 of rates attributed to this category, how much actually gets spent on genuine conservation, as opposed to parks and open space? I'd like to know.</p> <p>Under services, conservation seems to also be lumped into Parks and Reserves Maintenance. Straight away, the word "maintenance" doesn't imply conservation. It suggests cutting back branches from walking paths and managing weeds that the public complains about — which, frankly, is about all Nillumbik Council seems to do in some reserves. Again, why is a parks budget lumped together with reserves? They are very different matters!</p> <p>And would you believe it — sporting grounds are also considered part of Parks and Reserves Maintenance. Why? Sport is already under the leisure services category and receives a huge amount of funding!</p> <p>The way I read the draft budget from a conservation standpoint is: you could spend money upgrading already well-maintained sports grounds or maintaining public paths, and it would give the appearance of supporting conservation — simply because the money is coming out of the "reserves management" allocation. To me, this is highly unprofessional and not good enough.</p> <p>The environment is already suffering. As a sports fan and an ex-tennis coach, I can tell you there are already excellent tennis clubs and facilities throughout the shire. It was one of the first things that struck me when I arrived here 10 years ago. Spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on two Panton Hill tennis courts, and taking that money from a reserves budget, absolutely stinks in my opinion.</p> <p>However, I could be mistaken, and funding for reserve management may instead fall under Theme 2.3 – Environment and Conservation. From my reading, however, it appears that a significant portion of this funding is likely to be allocated to education programs, Edendale operations, and threatened species protection. These are all highly worthy initiatives.</p> <p>Nonetheless, it is important to emphasize that biodiversity lives and persists within the Shire's reserves and across private land. These natural areas urgently need direct protection and active management if we are serious about safeguarding the Shire's biodiversity values for the future.</p> <p>In summary:</p> <p>Spend more directly on biodiversity and conservation.</p> <p>Be upfront about what you're actually spending on conservation matters.</p> <p>Create a separate category called Reserve Management.</p> <p>Environment and conservation</p> | <p>The proposed budget allocation for conservation related expenditure for 2025/2026 is \$1.51 million.</p> <p>The Service definitions are reflective of the 2021-2025 Council Plan. This feedback will be considered as part of the development of the 2025-2029 Council Plan service definitions, and included in the next budget developed.</p> |

11. ██████████ (Greensborough Hockey Club)

Greensborough Hockey Club  
Budget Submission to Nillumbik Shire Council Draft Budget 25/26

Greensborough Hockey Club (Club) is grateful for the opportunity to provide a submission to Nillumbik Shire Council (Council) budget 2025-26.

The Club would like Council to consider including \$180,000 in the capital budget to enable the 25 year old sportsground lighting (Eastern pitch) to be replaced with compliant and more efficient LED lighting. This amount is based on a quote provided to Council in 2022 when we were advised the lighting upgrade had been included as a priority project in the 10 year capital works plan.

The club is currently having this quote updated and understands Council officers are also arranging for its preferred lighting upgrade supplier to provide a quote for this work. The club appreciates Council has finite resources and is required to balance needs across the municipality. This submission is to ensure that the importance of the sport ground lighting upgrade is clearly understood and the potential risk and safety concerns are noted.

The Club is based at Plenty Park and operates under a lease agreement. While this agreement provides the Club with exclusive use of the facilities it also requires the club to fund several aspects of the site infrastructure. The Club takes this responsibility seriously as is demonstrated by the Club's contribution of \$150,000 towards the pavilion upgrade in 2020, and is currently servicing loans totalling \$480,000 which have been taken out to meet the ongoing renewal costs of the two hockey pitches.

In 2023, the metal halide globes on the lighting poles on the western pitch were replaced, costing the club \$15,000, and increasing the lighting levels to meet standards, it is anticipated these lights with the new globes will provide sufficient lighting for the next 10 years.

However, the lighting on the Eastern pitch is now critical. A lighting audit has been completed by Council, which shows the average horizontal maintained illuminance (lux level) is 234.9 lux. This is well below the Australian Standard 2560.2.7.5 (2021) which states 350 lux for local games and training while 500 lux is recommended for high level competition. The club understands that based on the age of the lighting infrastructure, simply replacing the globes on the Eastern pitch will not provide the required lighting levels so full lighting upgrade is needed. The audit also notes that the existing switch access is unsafe for users as it is not external to the distribution board which should typically only be accessed by qualified electricians.

While the club has proactively met its infrastructure obligations, through loans where required, the lighting infrastructure including poles, fittings, wiring and fuse boxes are Council assets and therefore Council's responsibility to maintain and replace, this is also detailed in the lease agreement.

It should also be noted that the longer it takes to replace this lighting infrastructure, the more expensive the club's electricity costs are as the new lighting would be far more efficient and environmentally conscious LED lighting. For reference, the clubs annual electricity cost is \$25,000 which is predominantly the power required to run the pitch lighting. LED lighting uses approximately 75% less electricity and the globes last 5 - 10 times longer which will be a significant financial saving and overall reduction in power usage.

The sports ground lighting is required for both competition matches and training. The club currently has 25 teams, which is made up of 45% female and 55% male players with ages ranging from 7 to 70 years. This family club offers intergenerational playing opportunities from under 10 junior level, through senior levels and into masters with players over 65 still playing competitive matches on a weekly basis. The club plays an important role in genuinely ensuring people of all ages, genders and abilities can play and remain socially connected to the club through various life stages.

It is estimated that 900+ hours of our games and training is now undertaken annually under lights since Hockey Victoria introduced "twilight" competition to improve accessibility and participation rates for Juniors and Masters (35+) competition. Another 200 hours per year is used by School Sports Victoria as its state team training venue, Hockey Australia Masters as its Victorian training venue and Hockey Victoria to host the U16 Junior Country Championship. We also provide a training facility for local Cricket & Football clubs for their pre-season training and a social soccer competition is also played on Monday evenings.

The lights are below the current minimum standard, endorsed by Hockey Australia, which is a safety concern. The minimum standard for hockey is higher than the minimum requirements of sports such as AFL and soccer as the ball is smaller and harder which increases the injury risk.

As part of the Nillumbik Sports Ground Lighting Audit 2019, the lighting on the Greensborough Hockey (Eastern Pitch) was identified as a high priority for replacement due to the age of the lights and low LUX levels. Since then, Council has been exploring grant opportunities to help fund the replacement. Council officers will continue collaborating with the club on potential grant options. The 2025 Local Sports Infrastructure Fund will be proposed as a possible funding source for councillor consideration in late 2025.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>If, it is not possible to allocate the required funding in the 2025-26 financial year, the club requests a meeting as soon as practicable with senior officers to discuss the funding requirements and to plan for how the lighting upgrade can be achieved as soon as possible to ensure the club can continue to operate and to mitigate the risks of non-compliant lighting.</p> <p>██████████</p> <p>████████████████████</p>  |   |
| <p>12. ██████████</p> <p>Comments on the Nillumbik Shire Council draft Budget, 2025-26</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Council's draft budget for 2025-26. As a long term resident of the Shire, I welcome the chance to examine the underlying finances of Council.</p> <p>I bring over 40 years of experience in public policy, economic analysis, and management consulting, including 20 years' operating my own management consulting firm specializing in health and community services. I hold a Bachelor of Economics (Honours) and an MBA from Monash University and held senior executive positions in the Victorian health and community services departments, senior finance roles in Commonwealth and Victorian central finance agencies, and advisory roles in large global consulting firms.</p> <p>Overall Budget Parameters and Macro Settings</p> <p>Councillor's must be congratulated for the underlying fiscal responsibility demonstrated by the draft budget:</p> <p>It is noteworthy that that the overall budget shows minimal shifts in many of the key parameters that drive Council's financial performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Increases in projected 2025-26 operating expenditure are relatively small – a rise of around \$0.77m (0.7%) to \$113.040m, and</li><li>Total revenue from rates and charges is projected to increase by \$3.04m (3.7%), broadly in line with the State Government's Fair Go Rate System mandated increase for council rates</li></ul> <p>It is important to note the projected comprehensive operating surplus will fall by over \$10.3m from \$15.207m to \$4.895m. However, a large proportion of this shift is attributable to a reduction in grants beyond the Council's control, namely grants – capital (-\$9.716m) and grants- operating (-\$2.217m).</p> <p>Commitment to Biodiversity</p> <p>As a co-convenor of the Friends of the Eltham Copper Butterfly and a founding member of Nillumbio, an advocacy group for biodiversity enhancement, I strongly support Councillor's demonstrated commitment to additional resourcing in the draft budget for biodiversity measures, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Continue to deliver Nillumbik Forest Health Monitoring Program</li><li>Enhance promotion and support of 'Friends of' groups and opportunities for environmental volunteers</li><li>Deliver the Nillumbik Gardens for Wildlife Program in partnership with community volunteers</li><li>Reassess the vegetation condition of Council's bushland reserves.</li></ul> <p>Community members look forward to working with Council officers to explore how these additional investments translate to meaningful improvements for the well-being of nature 'on the ground'.</p> <p><u>Scope for Improved Reporting and Rate Payer Accountability</u></p> <p>While appreciative of Council's demonstrated commitment to strong financial stewardship and new measures to support biodiversity enhancement, I remain concerned about the lack of transparency surrounding budget expenditure at a detailed thematic and service area level. Specific areas of concern include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Within each of the four budget themes (e.g; place and space and sustainable and resilient) the draft lists major initiatives for 2025-26. However, without disclosing individual budget allocations for these initiatives, ratepayers have no assurance that new allocation of funds aren't simply being funded from a reduction in existing core service budgets<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Other levels of government identify the funding value of new policy initiatives.<br/>Why doesn't this standard apply in our own local government area?</li></ul></li><li>There is minimal historical and projected performance of the Council in each service area. The table below compares the number of services within each thematic area with the number of reported</li></ul> | <p>Budget allocations for Major Initiatives will be included in the Adopted Budget based on the feedback from this and other submissions.</p> <p>Service performance indicators are developed and set by Local Government Victoria. There are currently no indicators directly linked to environment, biodiversity or climate action outcomes planned for the 2025/2026 reporting period. All full listing of indicators can be found on the "Know Your Council" website, <a href="https://www.knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au">Know Your Council   vic.gov.au</a></p> <p>EFT detail by Directorate is included in the Budget document on pages 34 and 35.</p> |

| <div>indicators. Without reporting at the service area, rate payers can have little visibility of service quality and performance at an activity level:</div> <table><tr><th>BUDGET 'THEME'</th><th>NO. OF SERVICE AREAS WITHIN THE THEME</th><th>NO. OF INDICATORS / PERFORMANCE MEASURES REPORTED IN THE DRAFT BUDGET</th></tr><tr><td>Community and connection</td><td>8</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>Place and space</td><td>10</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>Sustainable and resilient</td><td>3</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Responsible and accountable</td><td>13</td><td>3</td></tr></table> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This level of accountability should also extend to:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ reporting FTE staffing levels by service area, and</li><li>○ development of performance measures that are outcome focussed rather than purely input focused.</li></ul></li></ul></div> <div>I would be pleased to further elaborate on these comments if that would assist.</div>  | BUDGET 'THEME'   | NO. OF SERVICE AREAS WITHIN THE THEME                                 | NO. OF INDICATORS / PERFORMANCE MEASURES REPORTED IN THE DRAFT BUDGET | Community and connection | 8 | 3 | Place and space | 10 | 3 | Sustainable and resilient | 3 | 1 | Responsible and accountable | 13 | 3 |  |
|---|--|---|---|--------------------------|---|---|-----------------|----|---|---------------------------|---|---|-----------------------------|----|---|--|
| BUDGET 'THEME'  | NO. OF SERVICE AREAS WITHIN THE THEME  | NO. OF INDICATORS / PERFORMANCE MEASURES REPORTED IN THE DRAFT BUDGET |   |                          |   |   |                 |    |   |                           |   |   |                             |    |   |  |
| Community and connection  | 8  | 3   |   |                          |   |   |                 |    |   |                           |   |   |                             |    |   |  |
| Place and space   | 10   | 3   |   |                          |   |   |                 |    |   |                           |   |   |                             |    |   |  |
| Sustainable and resilient   | 3  | 1   |   |                          |   |   |                 |    |   |                           |   |   |                             |    |   |  |
| Responsible and accountable   | 13   | 3   |   |                          |   |   |                 |    |   |                           |   |   |                             |    |   |  |
| <div>13. <div></div></div> <div>COMMENTS RE NILLUMBIK SHIRE COUNCIL DRAFT BUDGET 2025-2026</div> <div>Introduction:</div> <div>The World Economic Forum's <i>Global Risks Report 2025</i> states the following:<br/><b><i>Environmental risks - from longterm concern to urgent reality</i></b><br/><i>The impacts of environmental risks have worsened in intensity and frequency since the Global Risks Report was launched in 2006, as discussed in depth in Section 2.6: Looking back: 20 years of the Global Risks Report.</i><br/><br/><i>Moreover, the outlook for environmental risks over the next decade is alarming – while all 33 risks in the GRPS are expected to worsen in severity (Figure E) from the two-year to the 10-year time horizon, environmental risks present the most significant deterioration. Extreme weather events are anticipated to become even more of a concern than they already are, with this risk being top ranked in the 10-year risk list for the second year running. Biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse ranks #2 over the 10-year horizon, with a significant deterioration compared to its two-year ranking.</i><sup>1</sup></div> <div>It is also important to note that of the ten top global risks ranked by severity for a ten year period, the top four are all associated with <i>environmental factors</i>.</div> <div>Nillumbik Shire Council's emphasis on ecosystems and climate change in the Introduction to the Draft Budget 2025-2026 <sup>2</sup> is to be commended. It gives some assurance that Council holds awareness of the issues and associated need to prioritise relevant action.</div> <div>Having said that, Council's statements could be strengthened to reflect the severity of risk and urgency of need to act.</div> <div>It is also important to note that climate change is not the only significant threat to ecosystems, and Council's statement could be amended to reflect this fact. Biodiversity in Nillumbik faces significant threats – and is degraded daily – by invasion of introduced species (both animal and plant), habitat loss and fragmentation, increases in hard surfaces, pollution, and other impacts of urbanisation.</div> <div>Major Initiatives and Service Performance Outcome Indicators:</div> <div>Council should be commended for the inclusion of the 6 initiatives described in the Sustainable and Resilient theme.</div> | <div>Council has dedicated Environment team who support the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy. Council continues to explore grant opportunities in order to facilitate temporary additional EFT although this is not something we can anticipate or budget for. Council does review all vacancies arising to ensure resources are allocated appropriately.</div> <div>Council reviews each grant opportunity on the basis of service and infrastructure needs and priorities. All opportunities, both fully funded and those requiring co-contributions are assessed against parameters such as existing asset condition, required service levels, user demand, industry standards, available funding and the existing capital works program or service provision. Co-contribution grants are considered where the opportunity provides significant value to both Council and the community and the contribution is financially sustainable.</div> <div>Council is heavily invested in exploring circular economy opportunities to assist in Council achieving the target set out in our climate action plan. This particularly involves the exploration of sustainable design, reuse, recycling, repurposing, refreshing, maintaining, repair and minimising waste throughout our capital works construction and maintenance program. This is a key focus of all necessary construction and maintenance works is to explore these opportunities moving forward.</div> |   |   |                          |   |   |                 |    |   |                           |   |   |                             |    |   |  |



It will be important for strong indicators of success to be developed and evaluated appropriately for each of these initiatives. This is currently not reflected in the Budget. Council's own document states that, 'Council is required by legislation to identify major initiatives and service performance outcome indicators in the Budget and report against them in the Annual Report to support transparency and accountability.'

Such indicators are essential for best practice leading to best outcomes, for demonstrating transparency, and nurturing community trust.

Given full time staffing remains stable across the next ten years, how will Council achieve the projects needed to reverse the decline of biodiversity and mitigate against climate change? This needs careful consideration given there is already an overstretching of capacity to attend to current actions.

What will happen given many of the actions described in Year 1 of the Biodiversity Strategy Implementation Plan have not commenced or been achieved? Will these be rolled into the coming year with additional allocation of resources to ensure success?

**Other concerns:**

When Council accepts grants from sources that require matched funds, it means those funds from Council cannot be spent elsewhere. There is significant opportunity cost that must be reconsidered. The funds are often for infrastructure that then needs ongoing maintenance, adding to future costs.

Council needs to err on the side of caution before receiving such funds, no matter how appealing the sum is. Also, in a time when we urgently need to reduce our consumptions of all resources, Council should take the lead in clever revitalisation of buildings/infrastructure and see it as an opportunity to educate the community of relevant issues at the same time.

██████████  
██████████████████

<sup>1</sup> [https://reports.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_Global\\_Risks\\_Report\\_2025.pdf](https://reports.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Global_Risks_Report_2025.pdf)

<sup>1</sup> *"Council acknowledges the numerous threats facing all communities and ecosystems as a result of climate change and continues to commit to the implementation of the Climate Action Plan. This is reflected across the 2025-2026 financial year with budget allocations to multiple climate and biodiversity initiatives."*



DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

## Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029

DRAFT

**DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029**

**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.



DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

Table of contents

1. Introduction ..... 4

2. Training of authorised officers ..... 9

3. Programs to promote and encourage responsible pet ownership and compliance with legislation..... 10

4. Programs to address over population rates and any high euthanasia rates..... 13

5. Registration and identification ..... 15

6. Nuisance ..... 16

7. Dog attacks ..... 19

8. Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted breed dogs ..... 20

9. Domestic animal businesses..... 21

10. Nillumbik Regional Pound Facility ..... 22

11. Annual review of plan and annual reporting ..... 23

Appendix 1: Maps of off-leash areas in Nillumbik..... 24

Appendix 2: Maps of designated dog parks in Nillumbik ..... 37

DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

## 1. Introduction

### Purpose of the Domestic Animal Management Plan

Under section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (the Act), all Victorian councils are required to prepare a plan every four years, and to adopt this within a specified timeframe. The Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 (DAMP) reflects the expectations of the Nillumbik Community's vision for the next four years.

The format and content of a DAMP is set by the State Government in order to ensure consistency across the state of Victoria.

A DAMP must respond to the following key areas:

- Training of authorised officers
- Programs to promote and encourage responsible ownership
- Programs to address over-population rates and high euthanasia rates
- Registration and identification
- Nuisance
- Dog attack
- Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs
- Domestic animal business
- Other matters
- Annual review of the plan and annual reporting.

### Development of the Domestic Animal Management Plan

The DAMP was developed in accordance with section 68A the Act and outlines the objectives that will guide Council in its animal management services over the next four years. Community engagement allowed an opportunity for the community to inform us of what is important to them. The feedback based on the following broader topics has been used in developing the DAMP 2025-2029:

- Animal management services
- Programs or strategies
- Review existing Orders and Council Policies that could be amended to address effective responsible pet ownership in the community.

### Process applied in developing the plan

The DAMP has been developed in consultation with Nillumbik Shire Councillors and Council's Executive Leadership Team, Council's Community Safety Officers, relevant internal departments, external key stakeholders, and most importantly, the Community.

Pets play a vital role in our community, contributing positively to our health and wellbeing. In developing the DAMP, Council has actively engaged with the community to ensure the plan reflects the values and priorities that matter most to the community.

Key steps in the development included:

## DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

- **Consultation Process:** Various engagement methods were used to seek feedback from the community, including a comprehensive community survey promoted through Council's website, social media, posters, newsletters, and pop-up information sessions.
- **Community Feedback:** The community emphasised the significance of pets, concerns about dog waste, cat curfews, and the protection of wildlife. The community also provided feedback on dog being under effective control, the need for improved signage, and more environmentally friendly initiatives. Key areas for improvement include animal management, cat curfew policies, and education programs for children.
- **Final development:** The Council determined what matters most to the community and has used the comprehensive insights gained through the community engagement process to develop the DAMP 2025-2029.

### Key themes

The community feedback gathered through a comprehensive community consultation process has played a vital role in shaping the priorities outlined in the DAMP. The table below highlights the key themes and initiatives that will guide animal management activities within the Shire.

| Key themes                                       | Initiatives   |
|--|---|
| Responsible ownership of dogs and cats           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of an online responsible pet ownership prompt to coincide with new registrations</li> <li>• Provision of additional educational programs on responsible pet ownership to kindergartens and/or schools</li> <li>• Delivery of Pet Tales fortnightly posts on responsible pet ownership</li> </ul>  |
| Compliance of Acts Local laws                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure Council's legal obligations are met</li> <li>• Providing clarification on the meaning of 'Effective Control'</li> </ul>   |
| Dog attacks                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigation all dog attack incident reports</li> <li>• Prevention of dog attacks in community by encouraging reporting of nuisance dog behaviour, dogs wandering, rushing and off-lead</li> <li>• Investigate dog attack reports received from Animal Welfare Victoria</li> </ul>  |
| Over population of dogs and cats                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandatory desexing of cats prior to registration</li> <li>• Encourage and promote the benefits of desexing dogs</li> <li>• Exploring desexing programs available through grants</li> <li>• Investigate additional animals and breeding report</li> </ul>   |
| Registration and identification of dogs and cats | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring all dogs impounded at the Nillumbik Regional Pound Facility are microchipped and registered prior to release</li> <li>• Registration and microchip checks conducted on park patrols</li> <li>• Obtain new registrations as part of investigative case work</li> <li>• Dogs with current Council registration and wearing Council issued identification tags with no previous history are successfully reunited directly with owners where possible</li> </ul> |
| Dogs creating nuisance                           | <p>Address issues of dogs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excrement on ovals and in public areas</li> </ul>   |

**DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029**

|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
|                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Off-lead on trails and in on-leashed areas</li> <li>• Not under effective control in off-leash area</li> <li>• Nuisance level Barking</li> <li>• Not securely confined</li> </ul>   |
| Cats creating nuisance                | <p>Address issues of cats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outside of property during daytime and at night time, in breach of existing curfew</li> <li>• Preying on wildlife and native animals</li> <li>• Causing a nuisance to residents</li> <li>• Feral and stray cats</li> <li>• Protection of the Green Wedge</li> <li>• Educate cat owners on how to build cat enclosures and provide enrichment</li> </ul>                                  |
| Council's Orders and services         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review existing current Orders in accordance with the Act</li> <li>• Reunification of stray dogs and cats</li> <li>• Protect nature reserves and environmentally sensitive areas</li> <li>• Provide and maintain off-leash areas</li> <li>• Update maps of dog off-leash, on-leash and prohibited areas</li> <li>• Update signage in parks and reserves</li> <li>• Provide service for managing barking dogs</li> </ul> |
| Training of Community Safety Officers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nillumbik internal training modules</li> <li>• RSPCA training</li> <li>• Animal Welfare Victoria training</li> <li>• Training provided by another private providers</li> </ul>  |

**Context and current situation**

Nillumbik Shire Council delivers fundamental animal management services and innovative programs to achieve the best possible outcomes for our community in accordance with the requirements under *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

| Program/Service  | Service Level  |
|--|--|
| <p>Nillumbik Regional Pound Facility</p> <p>290 Yan Yean Road Plenty, Vic 3090</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operational 7 days a week</li> <li>• Capacity to accommodate service delivery for other providers (by mutual agreement)</li> <li>• Capacity to house up to 36 animals in individual pens</li> <li>• Capacity to house small pocket pets (rabbits, guinea pigs, ferrets and birds)</li> <li>• Capacity to house small livestock</li> <li>• Emergency accommodation for domestic pets</li> <li>• Accommodation for pets impacted by family violence</li> <li>• Accommodation for special circumstances / welfare</li> <li>• Declared emergency event accommodation for domestic pets and livestock</li> </ul> |
| <p>Cat Protection Society</p> <p>200 Elder Street, Greensborough Vic 3088</p>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides Council's pound and shelter services for cats</li> </ul>   |



**DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Cat trapping                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement deposit fee associated with cat trapping hire</li> <li>Hire period for two weeks</li> </ul>   |
| Pet registration                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Renewal notices posted February / March</li> <li>Reminder notices posted April / May</li> <li>Notice to comply served to owners with unregistered animals</li> <li>Door knock conducted by Community Safety Officers</li> <li>Infringements served to owners with unregistered animals</li> </ul> |
| New adoption sales                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive notifications from breeders and rescue groups of sales and adoptions</li> <li>Information packs sent to new owners to register</li> </ul>   |
| Pet Expo                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual event</li> <li>Promote responsible pet ownership</li> <li>Promote Rescue groups and support local businesses</li> <li>Create a fun and interactive event for our community</li> </ul>  |
| After hours emergency service              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service provides for contained dogs only</li> <li>Monday to Friday 5pm to 8pm</li> <li>Saturday and Sunday 8am to 4pm</li> <li>Dog attacks and aggressive dogs response is 24/7</li> </ul>  |
| Off-Leash and On-leash parks and reserves  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer to maps in Appendix 1</li> </ul>  |
| Park Patrols                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 x park patrols per officer each week</li> </ul>   |
| Domestic Animal Businesses*                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13 current registered businesses in Nillumbik</li> </ul>  |
| DAB Inspections                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspection audits are conducted annually</li> </ul>   |
| Declared Dogs Inspections                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspection audits are conducted annually</li> </ul>   |
| Dogs registered*                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9986</li> </ul>   |
| Cats registered*                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2946</li> </ul>   |
| Declared dogs*                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 x Declared dangerous dogs</li> <li>3 x Declared menacing dogs</li> </ul>  |
| Animals reclaimed**                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>65.82%</li> </ul>   |
| Animals rehomed**                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>32.69%</li> </ul>   |
| Animal surrendered to Council (NSC only)** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 Dogs</li> <li>22 Cats</li> </ul>  |
| Cat traps hired**                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>65</li> </ul>   |

\* as of January 2025

\*\* July – December 2024

**DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029**

**Demographic profile of Council**

Nillumbik Shire is located in Melbourne’s north-eastern suburbs, about 25 kilometres from Melbourne CBD.

The Shire covers 432 square kilometres or 43,194 hectares and features both urban and rural areas. Located less than 25 kilometres from the centre of Melbourne, the Shire of Nillumbik has the Yarra River as its southern boundary and extends 29 kilometres to Kinglake National Park in the north. The Shire stretches approximately 20 kilometres from the Plenty River and Yan Yean Road in the west, to Christmas Hills and the Yarra escarpment in the east.

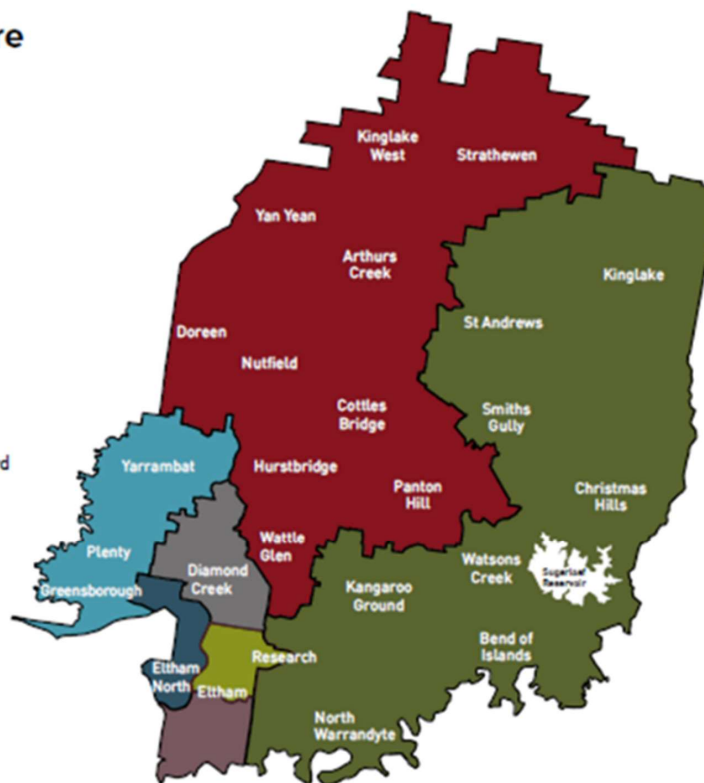
Nillumbik Shire services an estimated 63,264 residents in approximately 22,389 properties throughout the suburbs and townships of Eltham, Eltham North, Greensborough, Kangaroo Ground, Hurstbridge, Diamond Creek, Doreen, North Warrandyte, Plenty, Research, Wattle Glen, Yarrambat, Arthurs Creek, Bend of Islands, Christmas Hills, Nutfield, Panton Hill, Smith Gully, St Andrews, Strathewen, Yan Yean and Watsons Creek.

(Note: There is new information being recorded for 2025 and maybe ready before we finalise this document)

**Ward Structure**

**KEY**

- Blue Lake Ward
- Bunjil Ward
- Edendale Ward
- Ellis Ward
- Sugarloaf Ward
- Swipers Gully Ward
- Wingrove Ward



## DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

### 2. Training of authorised officers

Council is committed to enhancing skillsets by continuously identifying training opportunities and encouraging attendance at relevant forums, workshops, and seminars. These initiatives aim to equip officers with the necessary skills and qualifications to perform their duties as animal management officers with confidence and professionalism.

A detailed training program ensures that technical skills and knowledge are maintained in accordance with current industry standards. All training will be delivered with a strong customer service focus to assist with building and maintaining positive relationships with members of the community and visitors to Nillumbik Shire Council.

Animal Management Officers are required to hold Certificate IV Animal control and Regulation, Certificate IV in Local Government (Regulatory Services) or similar and to be competent in the use of Council systems.

Our Community Safety Officers hold relevant industry certifications. Additional scheduled training is also provided – refer to the table below.

#### Industry Related Training

| Training                        | Timing      |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Safe Animal Handling            | Annual      |
| Animal Assessment               | Years 1 & 3 |
| Canine Anatomy & Identification | Year 4      |
| Barking dog management          | Year 3      |
| Dog bite prevention             | Years 2 & 4 |
| Dog attack response             | Years 1 & 3 |

#### Good Governance Training

| Training                      | Timing |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| Customer Service              | Annual |
| Freedom of Information        | Annual |
| Privacy & Data Protection Act | Annual |
| Family Violence Awareness     | Annual |
| LGBTIQA+ Inclusion            | Annual |

#### Occupation Health & Safety related training

| Training                                  | Timing      |
|---|-------------|
| Working in remote area                    | Annual      |
| Situation awareness                       | Annual      |
| Conflict management                       | Annual      |
| Dealing with aggressive/difficult persons | Annual      |
| Manual handling                           | Annual      |
| First Aid                                 | As required |

#### Technical Skills

| Training                         | Timing  |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| Legislation awareness up-dates   | Monthly |
| Statement & Interview Techniques | Year 1  |
| System Training                  | Ongoing |

DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

### 3. Programs to promote and encourage responsible pet ownership and compliance with legislation

In Victoria, animal registration fees support a variety of services that enhance the welfare and management of pets and animals in the community. Beyond facilitating lost and found services, these fees help maintain and operate the Council's pound facility, fund animal control programs, and enable regular park patrols to maintain public safety. The fees also enable the delivery of educational programs on responsible pet ownership and animal welfare, helping to promote a well-informed and conscientious community. The fees include a State Government Levy that councils must pay for each dog and cat registration. These levies are primarily used to fund responsible pet ownership educational programs.

The key initiatives of the DAMP focus on promoting responsible pet ownership and engaging with the community through various educational programs. These include creating an online prompt addressing responsible pet ownership with all new registrations, offering additional programs to schools, and sharing fortnightly Pet Tales posts.

The aim of Council's annual Pet Expo is to promote responsible pet ownership and services and activities available for pets within the Shire and beyond. Residents have the opportunity to engage directly with Community Safety Officers, Shelters, Veterinary specialists and local businesses to promote, advocate and encourage with responsible pet ownership.

Information packs will also be provided to new pet owners upon registration. These information packs provide owners with valuable information about responsible pet ownership.

A barking dog kit will be introduced, and staff will continue to attend community events and organise interactive pop-ups. The website will also be updated with relevant information to support these initiatives.

Council will maintain and implement proactive programs to increase the responsible pet ownership message to the community and create additional spaces for dog owners to socialise their pets. This includes;

- Pet Tales fortnightly posts on responsible pet ownership
- Attending community events and promoting responsible pet ownership
- Providing educational programs on responsible pet ownership to kindergartens and/or schools
- Creating an online prompt addressing responsible pet ownership with all new registrations
- Undertaking regular park patrols to monitor, educate and, where necessary, enforce signage controls with our parks and other public spaces
- Ensuring dog owners understand their responsibilities, including what it means to have their dogs under effective control.

#### Our orders, Local Laws, council policies and procedures

The *Domestic Animals Act* 1994 serves as a framework for controlling domestic animals across Victoria, and aims to ensure the welfare of animals, community safety, and the protection of the environment. The Act includes provisions that enable local councils to issue specific orders relating to the management of cats and dogs in the municipality. In addition, the Act also provides other provisions that regulate the dog and cat ownership.

## DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

Nillumbik Shire Council has current orders in place that require cats to be confined to the owner's property under a 24 hour cat curfew. In addition, the orders specify where dog and cats are not permitted, regulate on and off-leash areas and require dogs to be kept under effective control in all public spaces.

Specified under the order, a dog is deemed to be under effective control of its owner if:

- a) It will return to its owner upon command
- b) The owner retains a clear and unobstructed view of the dog
- c) It does not bother or worry other people or animals
- d) It stays within 50 metres of its owner.

The Act also allows the Council to implement specific requirements for the registration of cats and dogs. Under Section 10A of the Act, the Council has made desexing a mandatory condition for the registration of cats.

In addition to the Act, Council also regulates the management of animals under the Nillumbik General Local Law 1.

The principal objectives of the Nillumbik General Local Law 1 are to ensure peace, order, and good governance of the Nillumbik Shire Council while promoting a healthy physical and social environment. These objectives include preventing nuisances that could negatively impact the community's health, safety, and quality of life, and regulating activities that may be dangerous or detrimental to the environment.

Part 6 of the Nillumbik General Local Law 1 relates to the management and control of animals on private land and in public spaces. The Nillumbik General Local Law 1 Procedure and Protocol Manual explains how Council and staff will administer the various controls and how decisions are made.

- *Domestic Animals Act 1994*
  - Section 10A (Mandatory desexing of cats)
  - Section 26 (Cat confinement)
- Nillumbik General Local Law 1
- Nillumbik Procedure and Protocol Manual

## Action Plan

| Action  | Timing      | Evaluation  |
|---|-------------|---|
| Regular park patrols are to be maintained at current minimum service level agreement  | Weekly      | Monitor park patrols and report quarterly through business plan |
| Create social media posts on a fortnightly basis to promote responsible pet ownership and any animal related issues affecting the community | Fortnightly | Report quarterly through business plan                          |

**DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029**

|  |                              |                                 |
|--|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Attend community event and promotes responsible pet ownership  | 6 monthly                    | Report through business plan    |
| Deliver Council's Pet Expo which promotes responsible pet ownership and showcases services available   | Annual                       | Successful delivery of Pet Expo |
| Deliver educational programs promoting responsible pet ownership to local schools and/or kindergartens | Annual                       | Assessment undertaken annually  |
| Create an online prompt addressing responsible pet ownership with all new registrations                | Implement Year 1 and ongoing | Online prompt implemented       |

**Off and on-leash areas and signage**

| Actions   | Timing     | Evaluation   |
|---|------------|--|
| Audit, and if required, replace signage at all off-leash dog parks  | Year 1 & 3 | Review audits completed at end of Year 1 & 3       |
| Audit, and if required, replace signage at other parks and reserves   | Year 2 & 4 | Signage updated and replaced if required           |
| Mapping of dog parks, leash free areas and prohibited areas   | Year 2     | Updated mapping and published on Council's website |
| Assess the feasibility of installing additional signage at designated dog parks and other strategic locations outlining what is effective control | Year 1     | Assessment completed                               |

DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

## 4. Programs to address over population rates and any high euthanasia rates

Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* requires the Council to address issues related to over-population and high euthanasia rates of dogs and cats. Nillumbik Shire Council's programs, services, and strategies aim to mitigate these issues through proactive measures.

The number of dogs and cats euthanised within Nillumbik Shire is relatively low compared to other councils. Euthanasia is often due to difficulties in rehoming animals and is mainly restricted to dogs and cats with temperament issues that pose a risk to public safety or animal welfare and may not be suitable for rehoming within the community.

For cats, the challenge lies in identifying and managing colonies of stray or abandoned animals. Many of these cats are trapped but cannot be rehomed due to conditions such as infections, untreatable diseases, or deformities, in addition to temperament issues. To address over population, Council works in partnership with the Cat Protection Society to promote desexing programs which aim to reduce the number of unwanted cats in the community and prevent further over-population. These initiatives are crucial in reducing the number of stray animals and ensuring better outcomes for pet welfare in the Shire.

To address the overpopulation of cats and promote responsible pet ownership, the Council has implemented mandatory desexing of cats prior to registration. Council is committed to identify any opportunities to explore grant funding made available to promote responsible pet ownership. In addition, investigations and inspections are carried out to ensure dog and cat breeders are operating in accordance with legislative requirements.

The Cat Protection Society's reduced-cost desexing programs will be further promoted to residents as an affordable option, and cat traps will be provided to help reduce the number of stray and feral cats in the community. These initiatives aim to reduce the number of unwanted dogs and cats within the municipality and improve the overall welfare of animals.

### Our orders, Local Laws, council policies and procedures

- *Domestic Animals Act 1994*
  - Section 10A (Mandatory desexing of cats)
  - Section 26 (Cat confinement)
- Nillumbik General Local Law 1 - Part 6
  - Clause 30 Keeping of animals
- Standard operating procedure for trapping of cats

**DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029**

**Action Plan**

| Actions  | Timing                   | Evaluation      |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Mandatory desexing of cats prior to registration   | Ongoing                  | N/A             |
| Promote the benefits of desexing dogs through case investigations, pop-ups and Pet Expo                          | Annual                   | Review annually |
| Explore grant funding made available to promote responsible pet ownership  | Dependant on eligibility | Review annually |
| Monitor compliance with the keeping of additional animals  | Ongoing                  | Review annually |
| Monitor and investigate to ensure dog and cat breeders are operating in accordance with legislative requirements | Ongoing                  | Review annually |
| Promotion of Cat Protection Society reduced cost desexing programs   | Ongoing                  | Review annually |
| Provide residents and businesses with the use of cat traps to reduce stray and feral cat populations             | Ongoing                  | Review annually |



## DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

### 5. Registration and identification

Registration and microchipping are legislative requirements under the Act which enables councils to better understand the extent of pet ownership in their communities. In Victoria, local councils manage pet registrations on behalf of the State Government, which includes setting and collecting annual registration fees.

Animal registrations allow officers to quickly and efficiently reunite lost and found pets to their owners. Registration also allows Council to invest in promoting safe and responsible pet ownership including undertaking educational programs, conducting regular park patrols and delivering Council's annual Pet Expo. Compulsory microchipping and Council issued identification tags enable officers to safely and efficiently return lost pets to their owners.

A range of promotional, educational and regulatory actions are applied to achieve compliance with legislative requirement. A strong focus will be placed on social media campaigns to promote the benefits of pet registration.

Council continually aims to increase and promote the registration of dogs and cats within the municipality. Officers proactively check registrations through regular park patrols and through case investigations.

#### Animal registrations

| Animals             | 2021           | 2022          | 2023          | 2024          |
|---------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Dog and Cats        |                | 10,608        | 10,549        | 10,329        |
| Cats                |                | 3,104         | 3,071         | 2,999         |
| Total Registrations | <b>13,832*</b> | <b>13,712</b> | <b>13,620</b> | <b>13,328</b> |

\*Individual dog/cat data unavailable

#### Our Orders, Local Laws, Policies and Procedures

- *Domestic Animals Act 1994*
  - Section 10 (Requirement to apply for registration)
  - Section 10A (Council may refuse to register dogs and cats unless desexed)
  - Section 26 (Dogs and cats found in places specified by the Council)
- Nillumbik General Local Law 1 - Part 6
  - Clause 30 - Keeping of animals

#### Action Plan

| Actions   | Timing  | Evaluation  |
|---|---------|---|
| All dogs impounded must be microchipped and registered prior to release | Ongoing | All dogs microchipped and registered prior to release - Review annually |
| Registration checks conducted during regular park patrols               | Weekly  | Report quarterly through business plan                                  |
| Identify new registrations as part of investigative case work           | Ongoing | Monitor and review as required  |

DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

## 6. Nuisance

Nuisance animals can have an adverse effect on amenity. Noise issues, in particular, can cause sleep deprivation, stress, and disputes between neighbours.

The most common nuisance caused by dogs include wandering at large, not being under effective control in public places, uncollected excrement, and excessive barking.

Key issues relating to cats in the community include cats roaming outside properties. Roaming cats pose a threat to wildlife and native animals through hunting, and can also create nuisances for residents. Stray and feral cats contribute to these problems and further impact native wildlife in the Green Wedge.

Nuisances such as animals wandering at large and uncollected excrement, hinder the community and visitors from fully enjoying Nillumbik's parks, reserves, and scenic streets. To address these concerns, officers will continue to undertake regular patrols in suburban streets, parks and reserves. Educational programs that promote responsible pet ownership will also be a key focus for the duration of the DAMP. Officers will actively monitor, educate, and where appropriate, enforce breaches of our orders and Local Laws.

### Nuisance complaints 2021-2024

| Nuisance complaints        | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|----------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Total number of complaints | 290  | 359  | 354  | 462  |

### Our orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

- *Domestic Animals Act 1994*
  - Section 32

Section 32 defines a nuisance in relation to the behaviour of cats and dogs.

A dog or cat is to be regarded as a nuisance for the purposes of this section –

- (a) if it injures or endangers the health of any person; or
  - (b) if it creates a noise, by barking or otherwise, which persistently occurs or continues to such a degree or extent that it unreasonably interferes with the peace, comfort or convenience of any person in any other premises.
- Council's standard operating procedures for barking dogs.

**DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029**

**Action Plan - Dogs**

Minimise the number of barking dog complaints.

| Actions  | Timing                  | Evaluation  |
|--|-------------------------|---|
| Introduce a new barking dog process aimed at assisting both impacted residents and providing dog owners with the tools to resolve issues                   | Year 1 and then ongoing | Effective delivery of new barking dog process in Year 1 of the DAMP and reviewed annually |
| Provide appropriate training to Community Safety Officers to ensure they have the tools to assist owners of barking dogs and manage barking dog complaints | Year 3                  | Reviewed at end of Year 3   |

Minimise the number of complaints received in relation to dogs wandering at large.

| Actions   | Timing  | Evaluation      |
|---|---------|-----------------|
| Attend to wandering at large reports within service level agreements                | Ongoing | Review annually |
| Return registered dogs to the owner when at large (for first offence only)          | Ongoing | Review annually |
| Dogs found wandering at large with history to be issued with an infringement notice | Ongoing | Review annually |

Minimise the excrement left on roads, footpaths and reserves

| Actions  | Timing  | Evaluation   |
|--|---------|--|
| Investigate and evaluate the feasibility of installing additional dog poo bags dispensers at various locations | Year 3  | Complete investigation and evaluation by end of Year 3 |
| Increased patrols at known hotspots where dog excrement is commonly an issue                                   | Ongoing | Review annually  |
| Infringement notices issued when offences identified for failing to pick up after their dog                    | Ongoing | Review annually  |

**DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029**

**Action Plan - Cats**

**Wandering at large**

| Actions  | Timing | Evaluation  |
|--|--------|---|
| Promote Council's 24 cat curfew via social media platforms and provide extensive communication around the introduction                             | Year 1 | Review success of communication campaign at end of Year 1 |
| Provide education material relating to cat enclosures allowing owners time to adjust and meet the new 24 hour cat curfew as per Council resolution | Year 1 | Review at end of Year 1                                   |

**Reduce stray / feral cat population**

| Actions   | Timing  | Evaluation      |
|---|---------|-----------------|
| Deliver cat trapping programs focusing on clusters of stray / feral cats                  | Yearly  | Review annually |
| Provide residents and businesses with the use of cat traps to reduce stray and feral cats | Ongoing | Review annually |

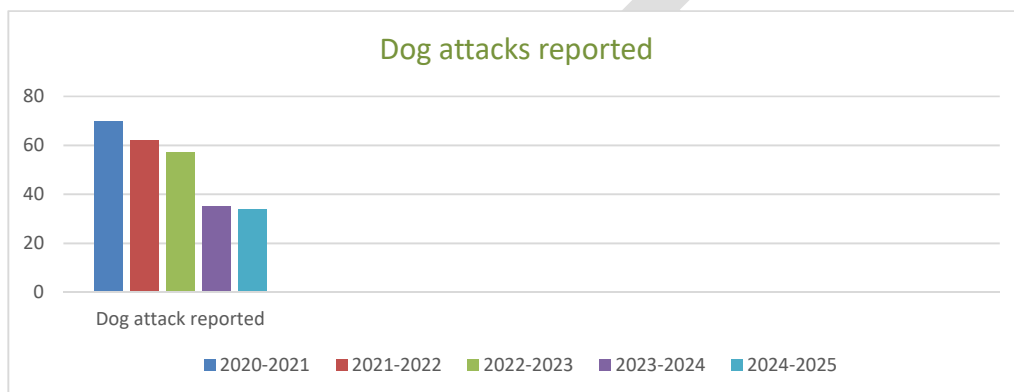
## DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

### 7. Dog attacks

Nillumbik Shire Council has a relatively low rate of reported dog attacks and dog rushes within the Shire. The majority of dog attacks occur when the attacking dog is wandering at large or not securely confined to their property. Reducing risk and responding to attacks and rushes is one of the core responsibilities of Community Safety Officers.

|                     | 2020-2021 | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Dog attack reported | 70        | 62        | 57        | 35        | 34*       |

\* as of January 2025



#### Our orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

- *Domestic Animals Act 1994*
  - Section 29 (Offences and liability relating to dog attacks)

#### Action Plan

| Actions   | Timing  | Evaluation  |
|---|---------|---|
| Investigate dog attacks as a priority after receiving incident reports in-line with service level agreements                        | Ongoing | Review annually   |
| Prevent dog attacks in community by encouraging reporting of nuisance dog behaviour, including dogs wandering, rushing and off-lead | Ongoing | Review annually   |
| Prioritise and respond to reports of wandering dogs displaying nuisance behaviour as a priority after receiving incident reports    | Ongoing | Review annually   |
| Maintain officer presence in the community by undertaking proactive patrols of parks and other public places throughout the year.   | Weekly  | Monitor park patrols and report quarterly through business plan |
| Provide education and promote responsible pet ownership at Council's annual Pet Expo  | Annual  | Review annually   |
| Conduct educational programs at local schools to promote responsible pet ownership  | Annual  | Report through business plan                                    |

DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

## 8. Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted breed dogs

Council aims to ensure that declared and restricted breed dogs are identified and managed to minimise the risk to safety of residents and the broader community. Fortunately Nillumbik has a relatively low number of declared dangerous, menacing or restricted breed dogs registered within the municipality.

In accordance with legislative requirements, a dog may be declared either menacing or dangerous placing specific legal obligations for the owner to keep the dog in accordance with the provisions of the Act. The Community Safety Officers may make a recommendation to Council for a dog to be declared either menacing or dangerous. Once declared, significant penalties apply to dog owners failing to adhere to the provision of the Act.

| Declared dog type | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|-------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Dangerous Dog     | 4    | 4    | 3    | 3    | 5    |
| Menacing Dog      | 4    | 4    | 4    | 3    | 3    |

### Our orders, Local Laws, Council policies and procedures

- *Domestic Animals Act 1994*
  - Division 3 - Particular provisions for the control of dangerous dogs
  - Division 3A - Particular provisions for the control of menacing dogs
  - Division 3B - Particular provisions for the control of restricted breed dogs

### Action Plan

| Declared dog Initiatives   | Timing                           | Evaluation                            |
|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Undertake annual audits on declared dogs                             | Annual                           | Report annually through business plan |
| Create new declarations created as required                          | As required                      | Review annually                       |
| Reporting on Victorian Dangerous Dog Register                        | Maintained and reviewed annually | Review annually                       |
| Investigate complaints of keeping a declared or restricted breed dog | Ongoing                          | Review annually                       |

## DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

### 9. Domestic animal businesses

All domestic animal businesses must register with their local council. Existing registrations must be renewed by 10 April each year.

Under current legislation, local council has the authority to:

- refuse registration of a business if they fail to comply with the legislation and relevant code of practice
- set special conditions on the registration of any domestic animal business.

Council undertake unannounced annual audits of all registered domestic animal businesses to ensure compliance the relevant code of practise.

#### Our orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

- Code of Practice for the Operation of Boarding Establishments
- Code of Practice for the Operation of Breeding and Rearing Businesses
- Code of Practice for the Operation of Dog Training Establishments
- Code of Practice for the Operation of Pet Shops
- Code of Practice for the Management of Dogs and Cats in Shelters and Pounds

#### Action Plan

| Registered Domestic Animal Businesses                     | Timing  | Evaluation                   |
|---|---------|------------------------------|
| Audit 2 x Pet Shops                                       | Annual  | Report through business plan |
| Audit 8 x Boarding Establishments                         | Annual  | Report through business plan |
| Audit 1 x Dog Training Establishment                      | Annual  | Report through business plan |
| Audit 1 x Shelter   | Annual  | Report through business plan |
| Audit 1 x Nillumbik Regional Pound Facility               | Annual  | Report through business plan |
| Investigate complaints received                           | Ongoing | Review annually              |
| Report audit and update information to Animal Welfare Vic | Annual  | Review annually              |

\* as of January 2025

**DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029**

## 10. Nillumbik Regional Pound Facility

Nillumbik Regional Pound is a Council owned and managed facility providing shelter for lost and found animals, surrendered dogs, seized dogs, livestock, various pocket pets and animals requiring immediate care due to family violence, illness and other emergency situations.

Council's pound is compliant with the Code of Practice for the Management of Dogs and Cats in Shelters and Pounds. The pound is staffed seven days a week including weekends and public holidays. However, in order to maintain a safe and secure facility for impounded animals and staff, the pound is not open to the public.

Registration and other associated payments can be paid online. Animal owners are required to make arrangements with Council Authorised Officers for the collection of their animal/s by appointment only.

Council has established agreements under section 84Y the Act with a number of animal rescue organisations that assist Council with rehoming any uncollected animals after they have met the minimum statutory period that Council is required to keep the animals.

The Cat Protection Society provides pound services for cats on behalf of Nillumbik Shire Council.

The pound also offers free care for up to ten days, or longer in certain situations, for dogs belonging to community members experiencing family violence or other hardships.

| Impoundments  | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---------------|------|------|------|------|
| Impounded Dog | 117  | 113  | 97   | 105  |
| Reclaimed Dog | 94   | 90   | 81   | 68   |
| Rehoused Dog  | 19   | 20   | 12   | 32   |
| Seized Dog    | 1    | 4    | 2    | 0    |
| Surrender Dog | 15   | 16   | 6    | 12   |
| Welfare Dog   | 0    | 6    | 1    | 1    |

### Our Policies and procedures

- Code of Practice for the Management of Dogs and Cats in Shelters and Pounds



**DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029**

## 11. Annual review of plan and annual reporting

Council is required to review this plan pursuant to Section 68A of the Act. The intent behind the review process is to ensure that the plan responds to current issues and opportunities over the four year period.

The annual review process evaluates whether the services provided are suitable.

An annual report will be presented to Council and the community at the end of each financial year at an Ordinary Council Meeting.

DRAFT

DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

## Appendix 1: Maps of off-leash areas in Nillumbik

- Fergusons Paddock - Hurstbridge
- Nillumbik Park - Diamond Creek
- Diamond Creek Reserve - Diamond Creek
- Eltham East Linear Reserve - Eltham East
- Woodridge Linear Reserve - Eltham
- Susan Street Reserve - Eltham
- Falkiner Street Park - Eltham (Barak Bushland)
- Plenty River Drive Reserve - Greensborough
- Griffith Park - Eltham
- Eltham Lower Park - Eltham
- Gumtree Reserve – Research
- Wattle Glen War Memorial Park (Wilson Reserve) – Wattle Glen

\*Updated maps of off-leash areas and designated dog parks currently in design and will be included in final DAMP 2025-2029.

DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

## Fergusons Paddock – Hurstbridge



### Looking after your best friend

To ensure your dog can be easily identified and returned if it strays:

1. Register it with Council, and
2. Get your vet to microchip it.

Under Victorian law, all dogs (and cats) registered for the first time must be microchipped. This entails implanting a tiny, grain-sized computer chip, containing a unique ID number, under the skin. The chip is inert, has no battery and uses no energy but can be scanned to identify your dog. It lasts the dog's lifetime. It is also advisable to have your dog sterilised (unless intended for breeding).

Remember, as a dog owner, you can be fined for:

- not registering your dog
- walking your dog in a prohibited area
- allowing your dog to wander at large
- not having your dog on a leash when it should be
- failing to pick up after your dog, and/or
- not carrying a doggy-do bag or container and leash.

### Fergusons Paddock, Hurstbridge

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Off-leash area                      | Playground<br>Dogs are not allowed within 5 metres of playgrounds |
| Off-leash dog park [fully enclosed] | Waterway  |
| On-leash area                       | Toilets   |
| On-leash path                       | Bridge/footbridge   |
| Dogs prohibited                     | Train line  |
| Skate park                          |   |

Enjoy walking your dog



DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

Nillumbik Park - Diamond Creek



DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

Diamond Creek Reserve - Diamond Creek





DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

Eltham East Linear Reserve - Eltham East



DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

Woodridge Linear Reserve - Eltham



DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

Susan Street Reserve - Eltham





DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

Falkiner Street Park - Eltham (Barak Bushland)



DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

Plenty River Drive Reserve – Greensborough



Looking after your best friend

To ensure your dog can be easily identified and returned if it strays:

1. Register it with Council, and
2. Get your vet to microchip it.

Under Victorian law, all dogs (and cats) registered for the first time must be microchipped. This entails implanting a tiny, grain-sized computer chip, containing a unique ID number, under the skin. The chip is inert, has no battery and uses no energy but can be scanned to identify your dog. It lasts the dog's lifetime. It is also advisable to have your dog sterilised (unless intended for breeding).

Remember, as a dog owner, you can be fined for:

- not registering your dog
- walking your dog in a prohibited area
- allowing your dog to wander at large
- not having your dog on a leash when it should be
- failing to pick up after your dog, and/or
- not carrying a doggy-do bag or container and leash.

Plenty River Drive Reserve, Greensborough

- Off-leash area
- Playground  
Dogs are not allowed within 5 metres of playgrounds
- On-leash path
- Dogs prohibited
- Toilets

Nillumbik Shire Council is committed to providing shared-use ovals for the whole community. At times these ovals are exclusively allocated for local schools and sporting clubs. No dogs permitted on the ovals when in use by these authorised user groups.

Enjoy walking your dog



DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

Griffith Park - Eltham



**DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029**

## Eltham Lower Park – Eltham



## Looking after your best friend

To ensure your dog can be easily identified and returned if it strays:

1. Register it with Council, and
2. Get your vet to microchip it.

Under Victorian law, all dogs (and cats) registered for the first time must be microchipped. This entails implanting a tiny, grain-sized computer chip, containing a unique ID number, under the skin. The chip is inert, has no battery and uses no energy but can be scanned to identify your dog. It lasts the dog's lifetime. It is also advisable to have your dog sterilised (unless intended for breeding).

Remember, as a dog owner, you can be fined for:

- not registering your dog
- walking your dog in a prohibited area
- allowing your dog to wander at large
- not having your dog on a leash when it should be
- failing to pick up after your dog, and/or
- not carrying a doggy-do bag or container and leash.

## Eltham Lower Park, Eltham

-  Off-leash area
  -  On-leash area
  -  On-leash path
  -  Dogs prohibited
  -  Dogs are not allowed within 5 metres of playgrounds
  -  Waterway
  -  Toilets
  -  Bridge/footbridge

Nillumbik Shire Council is committed to providing shared-use ovals for the whole community. At times these ovals are exclusively allocated for local schools and sporting clubs. No dogs permitted on the ovals when in use by these authorised user groups.

*Enjoy walking your dog*



DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

Gumtree Reserve – Research



Map not to scale  
[Melway reference 22F5]

**Looking after your best friend**

To ensure your dog can be easily identified and returned if it strays:

1. Register it with Council, and
2. Get your vet to microchip it.

Under Victorian law, all dogs (and cats) registered for the first time must be microchipped. This entails implanting a tiny, grain-sized computer chip, containing a unique ID number, under the skin. The chip is inert, has no battery and uses no energy but can be scanned to identify your dog. It lasts the dog's lifetime. It is also advisable to have your dog sterilised (unless intended for breeding).

Remember, as a dog owner, you can be fined for:

- not registering your dog
- walking your dog in a prohibited area
- allowing your dog to wander at large
- not having your dog on a leash when it should be
- failing to pick up after your dog, and/or
- not carrying a doggy-do bag or container and leash.

**Gumtree Reserve, Research**

 Off-leash area

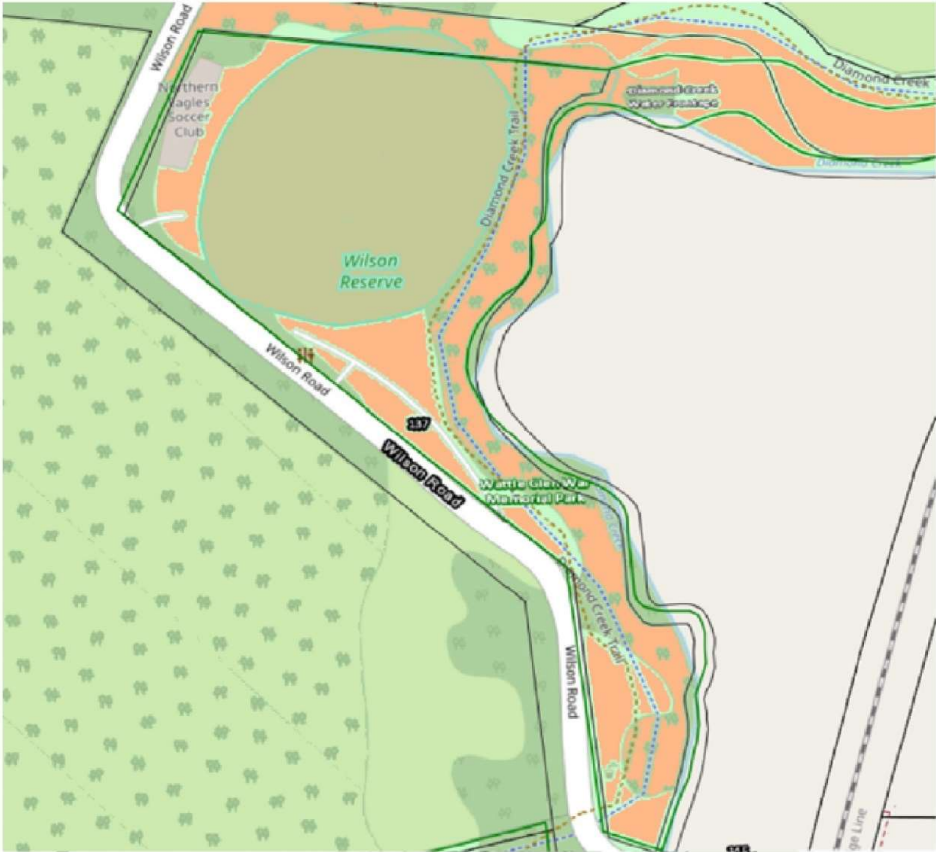
*Enjoy walking your dog*





DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

Wattle Glen Memorial Park (Wilson Reserve) – Wattle Glen



### Looking after your best friend

To ensure your dog can be easily identified and returned if it strays:

1. Register it with Council, and
2. Get your vet to microchip it.

Under Victorian law, all dogs (and cats) registered for the first time must be microchipped. This entails implanting a tiny, grain-sized computer chip, containing a unique ID number, under the skin. The chip is inert, has no battery and uses no energy but can be scanned to identify your dog. It lasts the dog's lifetime. It is also advisable to have your dog sterilised (unless intended for breeding).

Remember, as a dog owner, you can be fined for:

- not registering your dog
- walking your dog in a prohibited area
- allowing your dog to wander at large
- not having your dog on a leash when it should be
- failing to pick up after your dog, and/or
- not carrying a doggy-do bag or container and leash.

### Wattle Glen War Memorial Park, Wattle Glen (Wilson Reserve)

|                 |                                     |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Off-leash area  | No public vehicle access dirt roads |
| On-leash area   | Waterway                            |
| On-leash path   |                                     |
| Dogs prohibited |                                     |

Enjoy walking your dog

DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

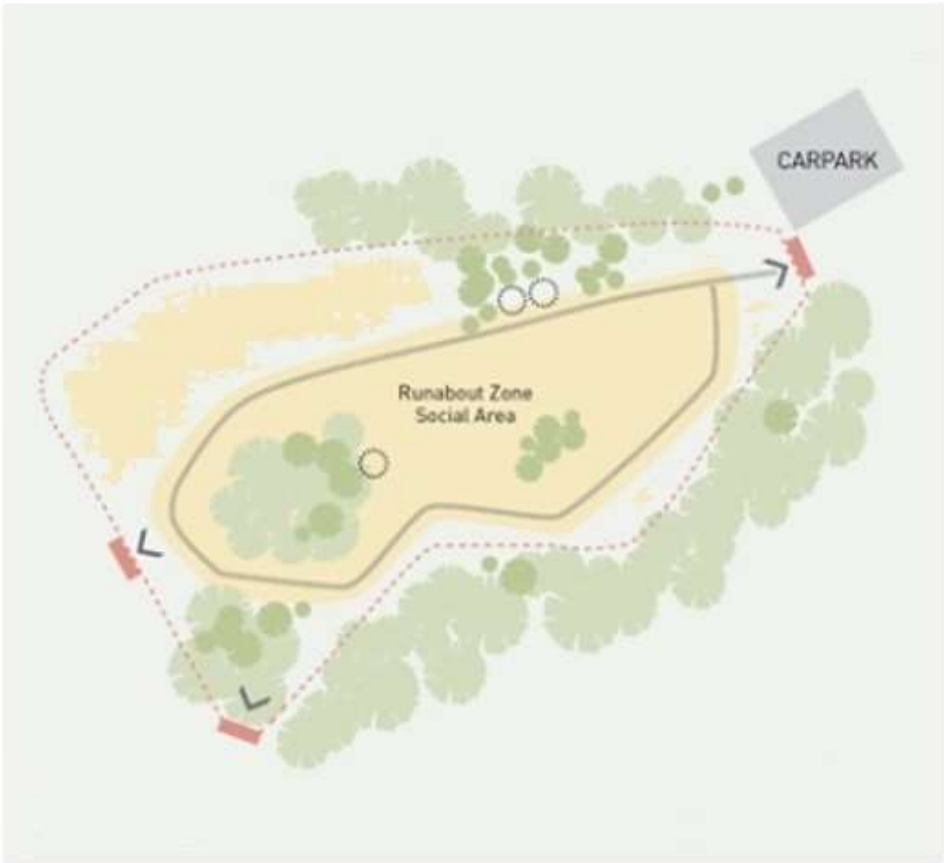
## Appendix 2: Maps of designated dog parks in Nillumbik

- Hurstbridge Dog Park - Hurstbridge
- Diamond Creek Dog Park - Diamond Creek
- Eltham North Dog Park - Eltham North

\*Updated maps of off-leash areas and designated dog parks currently in design and will be included in final DAMP 2025-2029.

DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

Hurstbridge Dog Park – Hurstbridge



### Looking after your best friend

To ensure your dog can be easily identified and returned if it strays:

1. Register it with Council, and
2. Get your vet to microchip it.

Under Victorian law, all dogs (and cats) registered for the first time must be microchipped. This entails implanting a tiny, grain-sized computer chip, containing a unique ID number, under the skin. The chip is inert, has no battery and uses no energy but can be scanned to identify your dog. It lasts the dog's lifetime. It is also advisable to have your dog sterilised (unless intended for breeding).

Remember, as a dog owner, you can be fined for:

- not registering your dog
- walking your dog in a prohibited area
- allowing your dog to wander at large
- not having your dog on a leash when it should be
- failing to pick up after your dog, and/or
- not carrying a doggy-do bag or container and leash.

### Hurstbridge Dog Park, Hurstbridge

 Off-leash area

 On-leash area

 On-leash path

 Waterway

Enjoy walking your dog

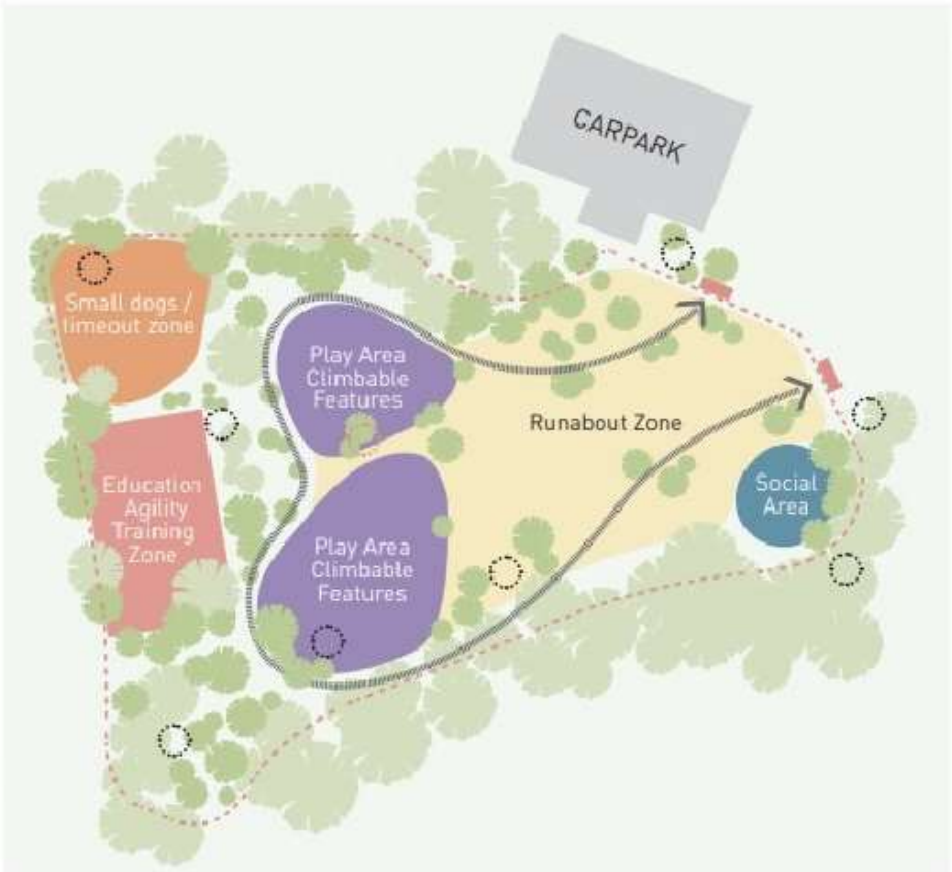


**Nillumbik**  
The Green Wedge Shire



DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

Diamond Creek Dog Park - Diamond Creek



Looking after  
your best friend

To ensure your dog can be easily identified and returned if it strays:

1. Register it with Council, and
2. Get your vet to microchip it.

Under Victorian law, all dogs (and cats) registered for the first time must be microchipped. This entails implanting a tiny, grain-sized computer chip, containing a unique ID number, under the skin. The chip is inert, has no battery and uses no energy but can be scanned to identify your dog. It lasts the dog's lifetime. It is also advisable to have your dog sterilised (unless intended for breeding).

Remember, as a dog owner, you can be fined for:

- not registering your dog
- walking your dog in a prohibited area
- allowing your dog to wander at large
- not having your dog on a leash when it should be
- failing to pick up after your dog, and/or
- not carrying a doggy-do bag or container and leash.

Diamond Creek Dog Park,  
Diamond Creek

Off-leash area

On-leash area

On-leash path

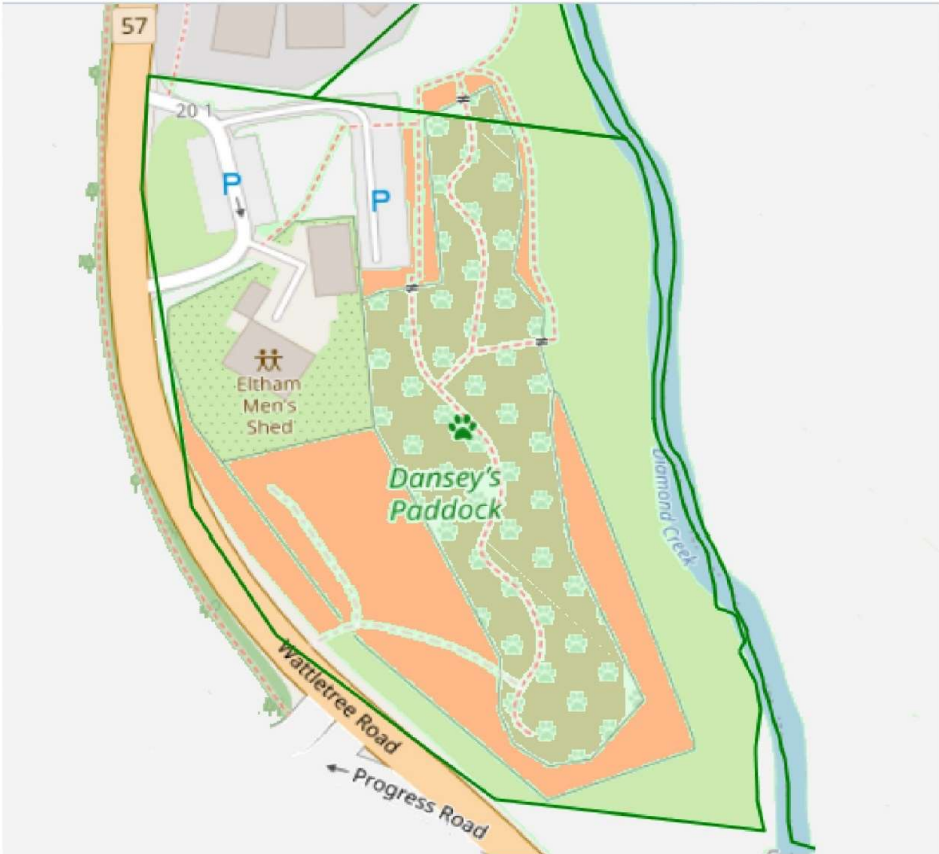
Waterway

Enjoy walking your dog

Nillumbik  
The Green Wedge Shire

DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

Eltham North Dog Park - Eltham North



### Looking after your best friend

To ensure your dog can be easily identified and returned if it strays:

1. Register it with Council, and
2. Get your vet to microchip it.

Under Victorian law, all dogs (and cats) registered for the first time must be microchipped. This entails implanting a tiny, grain-sized computer chip, containing a unique ID number, under the skin. The chip is inert, has no battery and uses no energy but can be scanned to identify your dog. It lasts the dog's lifetime. It is also advisable to have your dog sterilised (unless intended for breeding).

Remember, as a dog owner, you can be fined for:

- not registering your dog
- walking your dog in a prohibited area
- allowing your dog to wander at large
- not having your dog on a leash when it should be
- failing to pick up after your dog, and/or
- not carrying a doggy-do bag or container and leash.

### Eltham North Dog Park, Eltham North

Off-leash area

On-leash area

On-leash path

Dogs prohibited

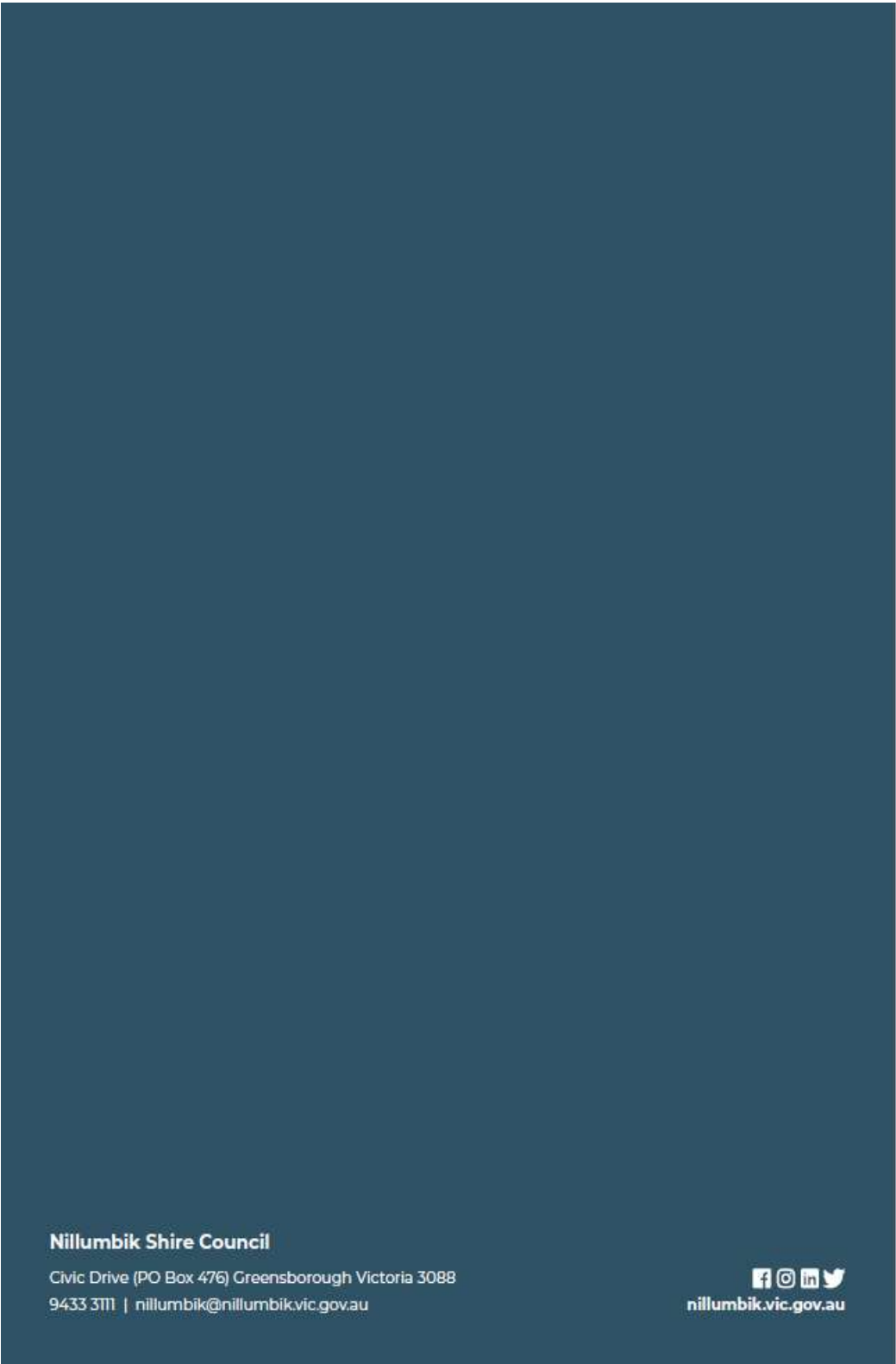
No public vehicle access dirt roads

Waterway

Enjoy walking your dog

**Nillumbik**  
The Green Wedge Shire

DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029



**Nillumbik Shire Council**  
Civic Drive (PO Box 476) Greensborough Victoria 3088  
9433 3111 | [nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)

     
[nillumbik.vic.gov.au](http://nillumbik.vic.gov.au)

THIS PAGE WAS LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

# Community Engagement Report

## Domestic Animal Management Plan

### 2025



COMMUNITY  
SAFETY

  
**Nillumbik**  
The Green Wedge Shire

**Attachment 2. Community Engagement Report – Phase 2**

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

## Content

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Project background | 1 |
| How we engaged     | 2 |
| What we heard      | 3 |
| Findings           | 4 |
| Next steps         | 5 |

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

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the Country on which Nillumbik is located, we 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.



---

### **Inclusion statement**

Nillumbik Shire Council is committed to creating a fair, equitable and inclusive community where human rights are respected, participation is facilitated, barriers are addressed and diversity is celebrated. We support the rights of all people regardless of age, gender, sexuality, ability or cultural identity. We value the diverse and changing nature of our community and understand that some groups and individuals experience more barriers than others.

## 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 insights gained during this phase of community engagement will inform and strengthen the development of the final DAMP.

### Community consultation was conducted from 3 March – 4 April 2025

The purpose of this engagement was an opportunity for community to provide feedback on the Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan.

Feedback on the draft plan was 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 including proposed on leash or off leash areas
- 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.

|   |                           |  |
|---|---------------------------|--|
|    | <b>Website</b>            | Total of 1,640 visits to the website <a href="https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/damp-2025">participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/damp-2025</a> |
|    | <b>Posters</b>            | A total of 50 posters were displayed throughout the Shire  |
|    | <b>Postcards/flyers</b>   | A total of 250 postcards and 250 flyers were distributed throughout the Shire  |
|    | <b>Corflute signage</b>   | 6 signs displayed at dog parks   |
|    | <b>Social media</b>       | Social media posts and paid targeted ads on Facebook   |
|   | <b>Newsletter</b>         | Nillumbik News Autumn edition  |
|  | <b>Pop-up information</b> | Community Safety information sessions estimated 40 visits at pop-ups with community at Eltham North and Diamond Creek dog parks.                 |

### Website

- Consultation via [participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/damp-2025](https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/damp-2025)

### Posters displayed

- 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 and Smiths Gully

### Pop-ups with community

- Eltham North dog park
- Dog Park users
- Diamond Creek Regional Play Space
- Diamond Creek trail users
- Families visiting playground facilities
- Engagement with approximately 40 people

### Sporting Clubs

- 59 Nillumbik clubs directly contacted and encourage to share survey with their members
- In-person engagement with approximately 80 participants at training events
- Additional Officer attendance at sporting grounds and proactively encouraging participants to complete the survey



**Social media, Facebook ads, pet tales**

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

**Postcards/flyers**

- 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
- Susan Street Reserve
- Wattle Glen War Memorial Park (Wilson Reserve)

**Nillumbik News**

- Autumn Edition

**Internal Consultation**

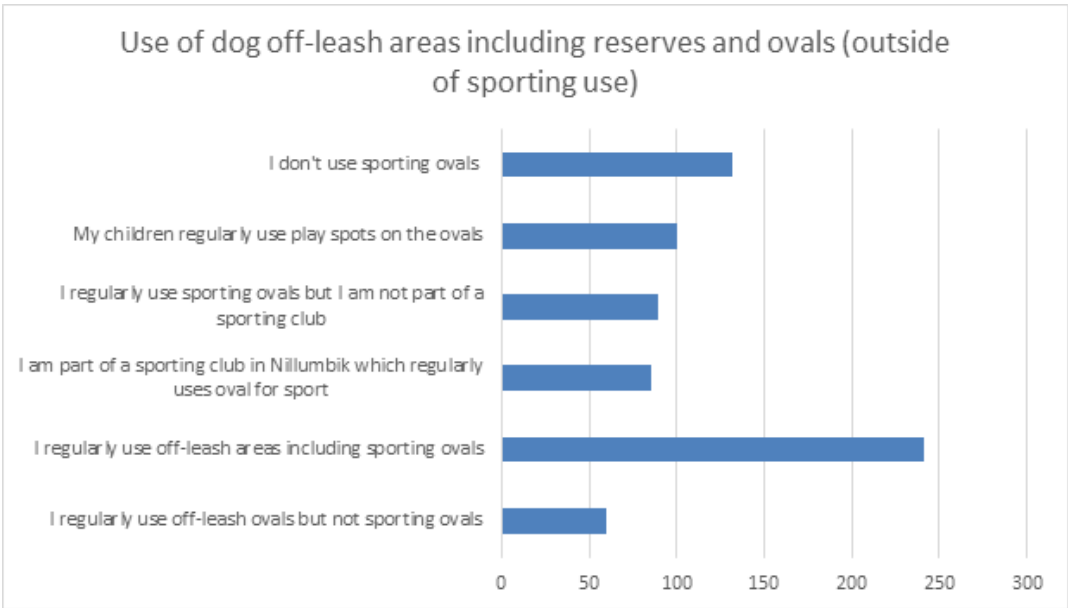
- Environment Team
- Recreation and Leisure Team
- Open Space Team

# What we heard

Below outlines the summary of feedback received

|                                |                                       |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Number of submissions          | 518 submissions received              |
| Number of community sessions   | 2 Pop-up sessions                     |
| Number of separate submissions | 6                                     |
| Number of website visits       | 1,640 number of visits to the website |

## Dogs



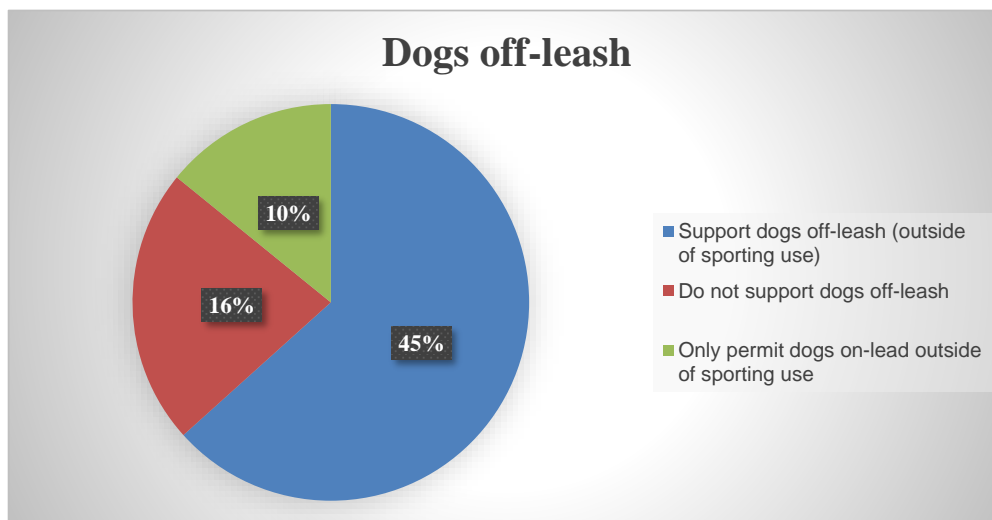
**Feedback in support of off-leash areas, including sporting ovals when not in use.**

- Sporting ovals are a shared community space for everyone to use.
- Dog parks are inadequate areas for many dogs. They can't get enough exercise there and there are regular fights.
- We should be allowed to have off leash dogs on sporting ovals whilst not in use . Has been very valuable for mental health.
- Often the parks are too small. Also, most people in our area have to drive to them and for some that is not an option. Usually, ovals are local and easy to walk to.
- Please keep this oval off leash, I know there are many dog owners who rely on this, plus without it the dog park will be completely unbearable
- Dog parks are a waste of money, they are too small, unsafe and encourage aggressive behaviour.
- All ovals in Nillumbik should be available to off leash dogs including the two ovals in the Eltham North sporting precinct.
- The cricket club and adventure playground ovals in Eltham North should remain off lead for dogs.
- The open spaces of ovals are ideal for large dogs to exercise, particularly if they are fully enclosed with fencing.
- The ovals in Eltham North on Wattle tree Road (Eltham North Reserve Top Oval near the soccer and cricket club) and the Adventure Playground oval need to be designated off lead areas when not in use by authorised groups.
- Off lead dogs should be allowed on the Eltham North ovals
- The Eltham Wanderers oval on Wattle tree road and the oval opposite Eltham North Primary should be off leash ovals for dogs when not in use by groups/ sporting clubs. The dog poo bags have been very effective, and I find majority of dog owners clean up after themselves.
- I just want an area of flat, fenced, maintained grass, sizeable enough to exercise meaningfully, paddock. The dog parks are small, cluttered and you can't do anything in them other than stand on the spot and watch your dog walk around bored.
- There are more dog owners (over 4,000) than sporting club members. If we were a club, we would have more rights. If more restrictions are placed a few of us will think about forming a club.
- We love exercising with our dog on the oval. It gives us both an opportunity to exercise freely.
- Sporting ovals allow me to walk around and get exercise as well as the dog. Dog parks only allow dogs to get exercise.
- ng the signage and continue using the ovals. They are public open space and should be open for use by all when not used for sport.
- Off lead areas are so important for our pets and also their owners
- Ovals need to be available for dog use out of sporting activity.
- Ovals are ideal for exercising large dogs. They are large open and flat, which means they are much safer than dog parks.
- All ovals in the shire should be shared use (see original survey!) so that dogs can be exercised off leash when not in use by authorised groups.
- Active dogs need large spaces and people wanting to jog/exercise with their dogs

**Attachment 2. Community Engagement Report – Phase 2**

should be able to use the available ovals that are already a public asset.

- The Redbacks Eltham North Ovals should be available for off lead dog use. Plenty of room to run and chase balls. And my children and I can exercise with our dogs. Plus, no snakes.
- The ovals mean we can jog with our dogs or play kick to kick with our kids. There is enough space on the ovals for everyone, and dog walkers pick up a lot of rubbish as well as their dogs' poo.
- The top and bottom ovals at Eltham North should be available for off lead dogs.
- Dog parks are too small for large and active dogs. There are also lots of obstacles that make them unsafe when very busy,
- Oval should be available at particular hours. It's a great socializing space for big dogs to stretch their legs and owners to get exercise at the same time.
- Dog parks are ok, but they do not provide the space for large dogs to burn off excess energy. They are not an adequate replacement for ovals which are large, flat open spaces safe for dogs and people.
- Please keep existing arrangements at sporting ovals in place. i.e. dogs allowed off leash when oval not being used by organized sporting groups.
- I love the option of the oval being off leash. We always walk onlead along the trail then spend time being off leash on the oval.
- Also remember dog owners pay rates as well!!
- Dog Parks are a disgusting waste of ratepayer funds. Stupid, unsafe and unhealthy.
- Dog parks are not an adequate replacement for ovals as off leash facilities. They are less accessible for people with mobility issues. Dogs can become aggressive in enclosed spaces.
- All sporting ovals should support dogs off-leash (outside of sporting use). These are community resources for the community.
- Walking dogs on and off leash provides essential exercise for owners and dogs. The social and community interaction opportunities should not be underestimated and are vital in a society where people are increasingly isolated.
- Please continue to make this oval available. It works well with sports clubs and is always very clean and free from dog poo.
- The dedicated dog parks can be overcrowded and cause issues with other dogs. We love to use the oval at Wilson's road when there isn't any sports on.
- There needs to be areas where dogs can be walked on leads where they are not approached by off lead dogs
- Dog parks and in particular ovals are important community meeting places for dog owners, sometimes it is thought that ovals can be replaced with smallish dog parks but in reality. A lot of dogs need large open spaces to run and their energy needs are not met at dog park
- These need to be monitored every now and then for compliance to general rules that few seem to comprehend
- The more ovals off lead (when not in use for sports) the better
- Given that most respondents prefer shared use sporting ovals, this should become policy moving forward. Shared use ovals allow dogs to be exercised and socialized off lead in a large, safe, pre-existing environment



Of those who responded to the questions regarding dogs off-leash areas in the maps listed in the Draft DAMP 2025-2029, an average of 45 per cent (233 respondents) said they support dogs off-leash (including on ovals outside of sporting use) 16 per cent (85 respondents) do not support dogs off-leash and 10 per cent (52 respondents) prefer to only permit dogs on-leash.

**Feedback against off-leash in all areas, including sporting ovals.**

- Define under effective control.
- Dogs should not be permitted on sporting ovals.
- Where there is a purpose-built facility for dogs near an oval, there is no reason for dogs to be on an oval which has been purpose-built for sporting activities.
- I have experienced dogs off leash which are not under control on several occasions. jumping up on me, knocking me over & attacking my on-leash dog so I am in favor of restricting off leash areas where activities/people merge (ovals)
- Too many dogs are walked off lead when they should be on lead and then these dog owners don't pick up after their dog.
- It can be really dangerous for other dogs and children when dogs are off leash and not under control.
- It's an ongoing issue with owners allowing their off-lead dogs to approach other people and dogs.
- Dogs should not be allowed off lead on sporting grounds. Owners do not adequately pick up after their pets and make it really disgusting and unsanitary for those who play sport. There are plenty of other off lead areas where dogs can be exercised.
- It is important to recognize the particular importance of our area as part of a wildlife corridor. What is not often understood is the impact on native wildlife of dog scent trails left by every dog, everywhere they go, and the inhibiting impact these have on native wildlife.
- Rude dog owners unleash their dogs and do nothing when their dogs attack other dogs or people.
- Signage about the penalties might help, there are too many dogs being put at risk, as well as risk to walkers and bike riders on shared paths.
- No dogs outside of dog parks at all times.

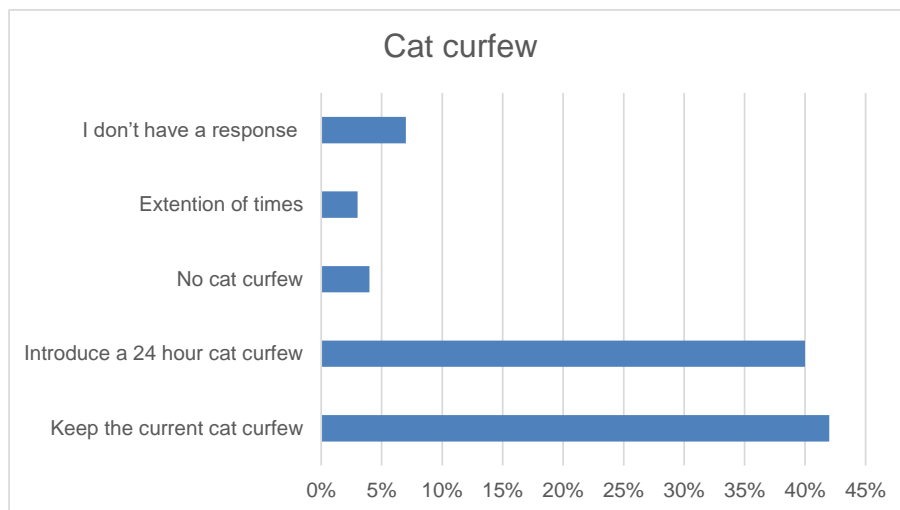
**Attachment 2. Community Engagement Report – Phase 2**

- Please enforce the on-leash areas!
- I hope responsible dog ownership is monitored. There are too many dogs off leash with owners who don't have control.
- All areas on leash. No off-leash areas. No off-leash areas on waterways.
- Snappy dogs should not be off lead, overly boisterous big dogs should be monitored and restrained more, dog poo must be picked up, all dogs off lead must have excellent recall.
- Dogs off lease should be banned from all sporting fields in Nillumbik. There are now numerous dog parks for the purpose of letting a dog off lead. This should be a statewide strategy to avoid conflict and health and safety issues.
- I'm disappointed in the number of dogs that are off leash being walked in the streets. Having small kids that are terrified of dogs is not a great scenario. I have asked a dog owner before to put his dog on a leash and was confronted with aggression. I would love to see something happening about this issue.
- Having dogs on sports grounds is crazy. They poo and piss everywhere and it is rarely cleaned.
- Eltham Lower ovals should be totally dog free given the dedicated Eltham Lower dog park.
- No dogs allowed off leash on sporting fields at Lower Eltham
- Should not be allowed on sporting grounds.
- Eltham lower park ovals are full of dog poo which is frustrating to play sport on
- Get off the grounds. Pick up dog mess.
- We need to get dogs off the rear oval as the damage, especially in winter is not welcome, and the fields and already in poor condition.
- Get dogs off the oval at Eltham lower. Have lacrosse there for 30 years. Fallen in dog poo multiple times which is disgusting and hazardous.
- Dog owners won't use dog parks. They don't like how the dogs destroy the ground and are aggressive to each other so instead just use the sports fields and ruin these, leaving dog poo, digging holes.
- My son plays lacrosse. I absolutely shudder when he or other players fall and slide through the mud that has been peed and pooped on. Perhaps there should be testing on these grounds as to health hazards these and players on other grounds are facing.
- As an owner of a greyhound, a dog which must remain on lead, I think it is important that there remain on leash areas.
- Off lead dogs should only be allowed in fenced areas as owners rarely control their dogs
- The need to exercise and socialize dogs off-leash is well catered for with the existing dogs parks and open space
- Keep dogs off sporting areas completely.
- No dogs on Eltham lower oval and provide off lead area on front oval instead.
- Keep dogs on leash during sport training and games.

## Cats

### Cat Curfew

42 per cent (218 respondents) responded to keep the current cat curfew compared to 40 per cent (211 respondents) who support a 24-hour curfew.



#### Feedback in support of keeping existing cat curfew

- Promote cat curfew more.
- 24/7 cat curfew is unfair to cats that have been permitted outside.
- If council introduces a 24/7 cat curfew this would be a burden on cat owners.
- Cats are safer indoors and live longer.
- Keep existing cat curfew between hours of 7.30pm and 6am, most people take this seriously.
- Making cats stay indoors is distressing for the animal.
- Keep existing cat curfew, means households with lower income are not disproportionately impacted by changes.
- If council introduce a 24/7 cat curfew, many cats will be relinquished, causing stress for cat owners and their cats.
- Cats should be restricted to cat runs 24/7.
- If council introduce 24/7 cat curfew more cats will be dumped.
- Locking cats up during the day is unreasonable.
- It is cruel and unnecessary to introduce a 24/7 cat curfew.
- If Council introduce a 24/7 cat curfew, we would not be able to keep our cats because they must be separated during the day.
- 24/7 cat curfew is not sustainable or fair for cats with anxiety issues that have been indoor/outdoor their whole life.
- 24/7 cat curfew will result in a lot more surrenders.
- The current cat curfew is adequate and allows cats necessary time in their natural habitat.
- A 24/7 cat curfew cannot be applied retrospectively.

**Attachment 2.      Community Engagement Report – Phase 2**

- A 24/7 cat curfew cannot be implemented unless council fund property alteration.
- Cats should not be locked up 24/7.

**Feedback in support of 24-hour cat curfew**

- Current cat curfew is inadequate because it is already dark by 7.30pm and wildlife may have already been impacted.
- Council should introduce a 24/7 cat curfew, as we find feathers and possum carcasses in our yard.
- If dogs have to be confined to their yard so should cats 24/7
- The impact on local wildlife needs to be considered.
- Fundamental importance of 24/7 cat curfew in Green Wedge Shire.
- Cat faeces are full of toxins that affect wildlife, owners must deal with their waste appropriately.
- Consider grandfather option, Introduce new 24/7 cat curfew for new cat owner only.
- Council should consider partnering with a Catio maker offering a bulk discount.
- Roaming cats are a real problem.
- Owners need to have more education about confinement.
- Too many free roaming cats, especially in Wattle Glen.
- Cats need to be controlled to stop killing small wildlife.
- 24/7 Cat curfew is essential to preserve our Green Wedge animal and bird life.
- Residents are frustrated with cats excreting and urinating in their garden and on personal items.
- Cats are predators and destructive to wildlife.
- Council should consider exploring reduced desexing initiatives.
- Implement 24 hours curfew with new/ young kitten registrations.

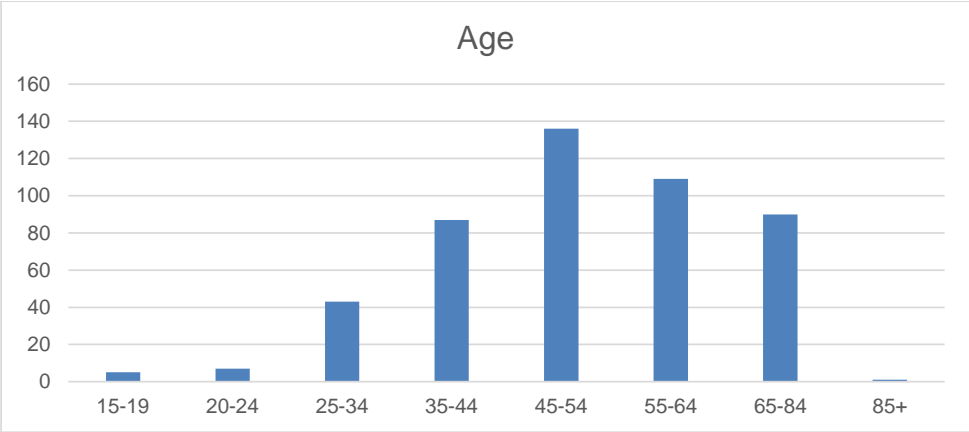


**Recommendations for consideration in DAMP 2025-2029 Implementation:**

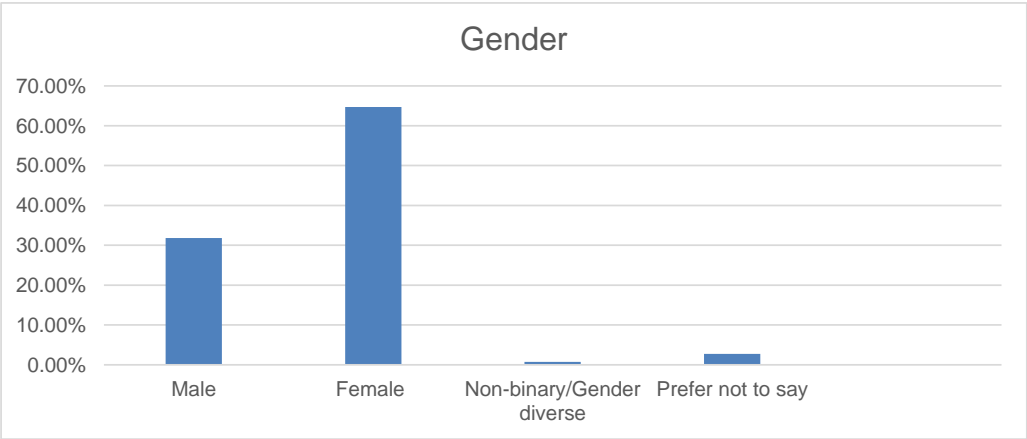
- Elaborate on definition of under effective control
- Establish information booklet on animal breeds and common temperament issues
- Install clearer signage, easier to understand on ovals and other areas
- Provide feedback around dog park construction and potential recommendation for better use (lighting, rubbish bins etc.)
- Conduct more pop ups, educating responsible pet ownership (consider bringing external providers along RSPCA)
- Increase park patrols
- Promote responsible pet ownership around dogs on leash
- Provide/Install more bins around the municipality for disposal of rubbish and dog poo bags
- Promote the benefits of desexing your cats (mandatory)
- Review barking dog process and educate community on strategies to mitigate barking
- Promote responsible pet ownership through videos series
- Stronger enforcement around non compliances relating to animal offences
- Explore initiatives for reduced cost desexing and promote
- Consider training sessions for new dog owners or nuisance animals
- Promote cat curfew more and include in animal registration brochure
- Consider 12 months animal registration refund policy
- Install more dog poo bag dispensers around the municipality, particularly along the trails
- Publish information on our website around dog attacks process
- Consider cat containment/enclosure building sessions (potentially joint with local businesses/Cat Protection Society) – if 24/7 cat curfew is introduced.
- Explore initiatives to offer discount for enclosures – if 24/7 cat curfew is introduced.

# Who we engaged with

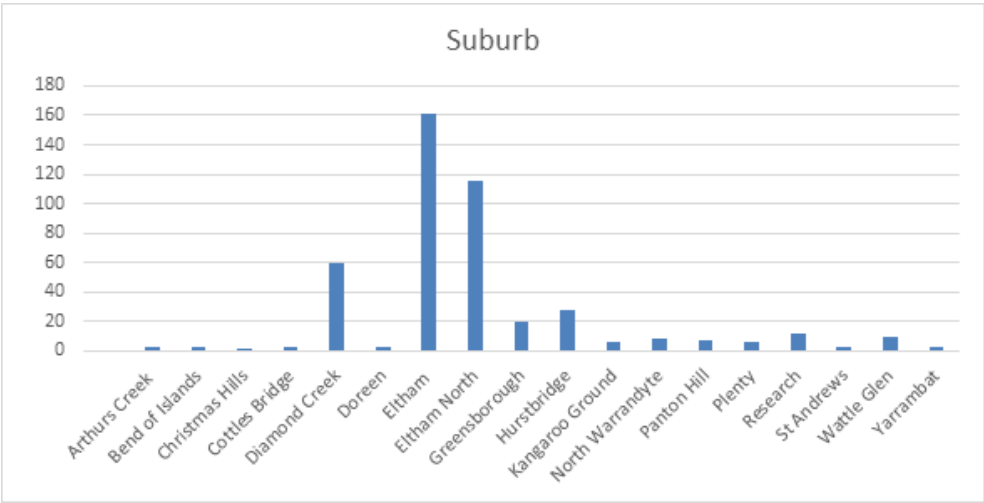
## Age



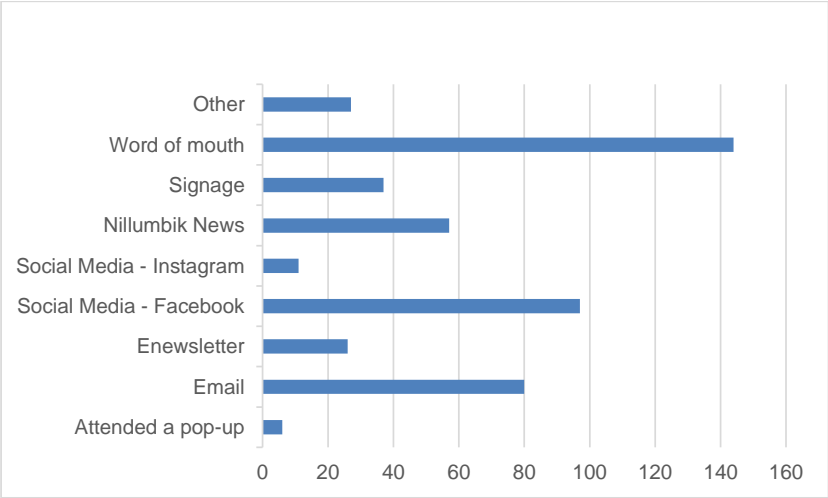
## Gender



Suburb of respondents



How they heard about the consultation



## Next steps

The new Domestic Animal Management Plan to be adopted at a future Council Meeting.

**How can participants stay informed?**

Register for updates or follow the project on Participate Nillumbik  
[participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au](https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au)

For more information contact email [communitysafety@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:communitysafety@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)

If you need an interpreter, please call



TIS National on 131 450 and ask them to  
call Nillumbik Shire Council on 9433 3111.

**Nillumbik Shire Council**

Civic Drive (PO Box 476) Greensborough Victoria 3088

9433 3111 | [nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)



# Community Engagement Report

## Domestic Animal Management Plan

### 2025



COMMUNITY  
SAFETY

  
**Nillumbik**  
The Green Wedge Shire

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

## Content

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Project background | 1 |
| How we engaged     | 2 |
| What we heard      | 3 |
| Findings           | 4 |
| Next steps         | 5 |

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

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

### Website

- Consultation via [participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/damp-2025](https://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.

|                                       |                                       |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Number of submissions</b>          | 707 submissions received              |
| <b>Number of community sessions</b>   | 2 Pop up sessions                     |
| <b>Number of separate submissions</b> | 7                                     |
| <b>Number of website visits</b>       | 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

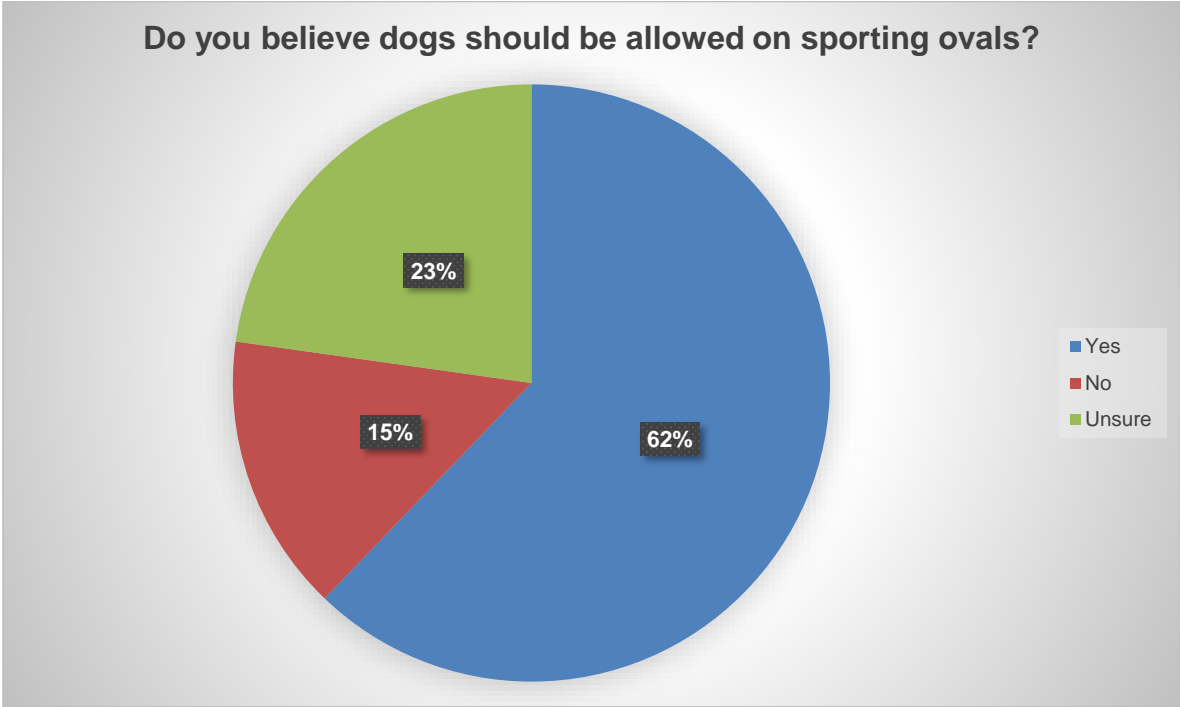
### **Services provided by Nillumbik that is important to our community**

- 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

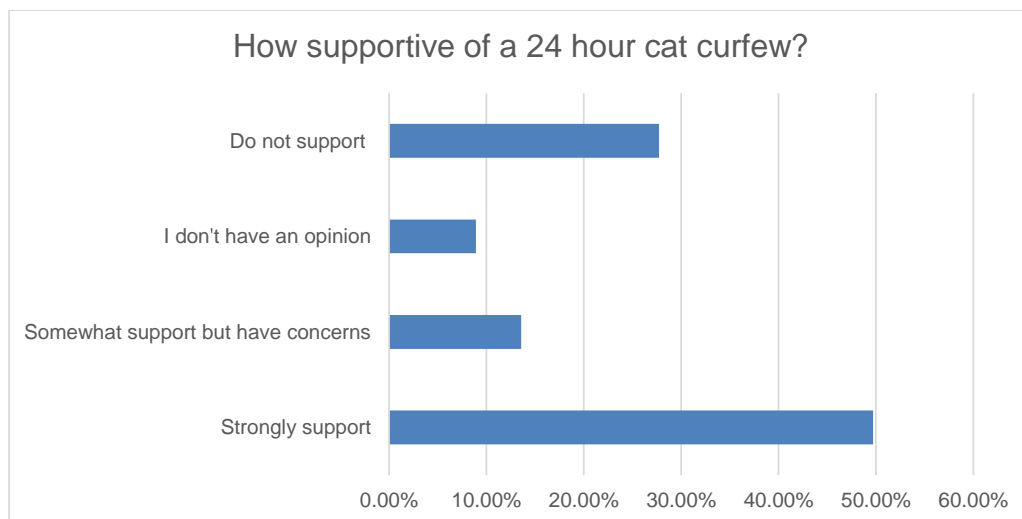


62 per cent (434 respondents) believe dogs should be allowed on sporting ovals in comparison to 23 per cent (159 respondents) do not believe they should be allowed and 15 per cent (105 respondents) are unsure.

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

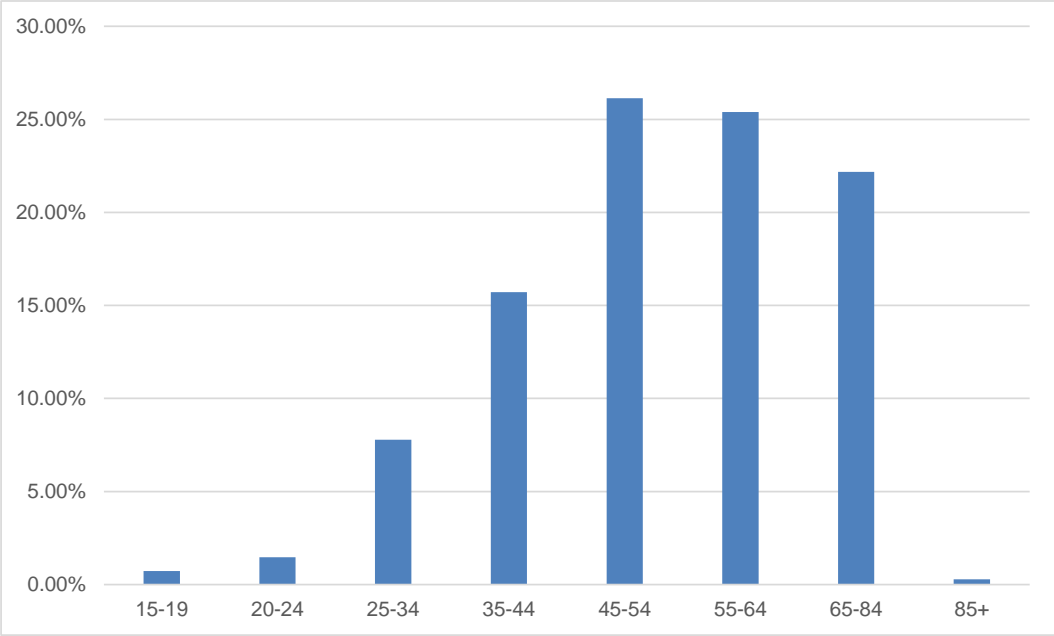
- Provide maintain off lead areas (60 per cent/418 respondents)
- Protect/enforce dog-free nature reserves/environmentally sensitive areas (53 per cent/370 respondents)
- Collect/return stray cats/dogs to their owners (51 per cent/358 respondents)
- Discounted dog/cat microchipping for pensioners (50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

### Education for children

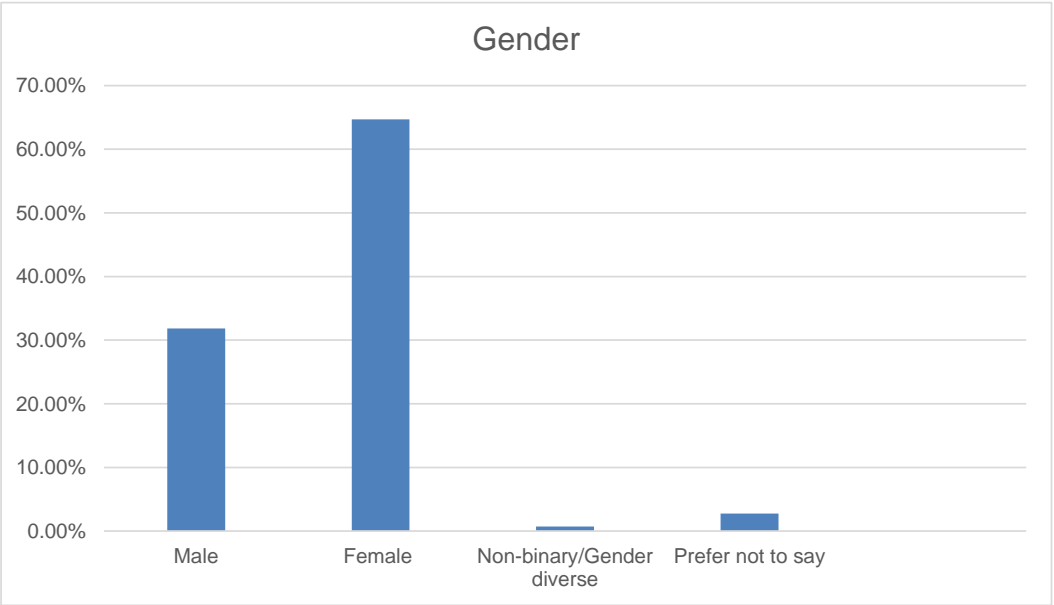
61 per cent (431 respondents) believe that Council should educate children on approaching dogs safely.

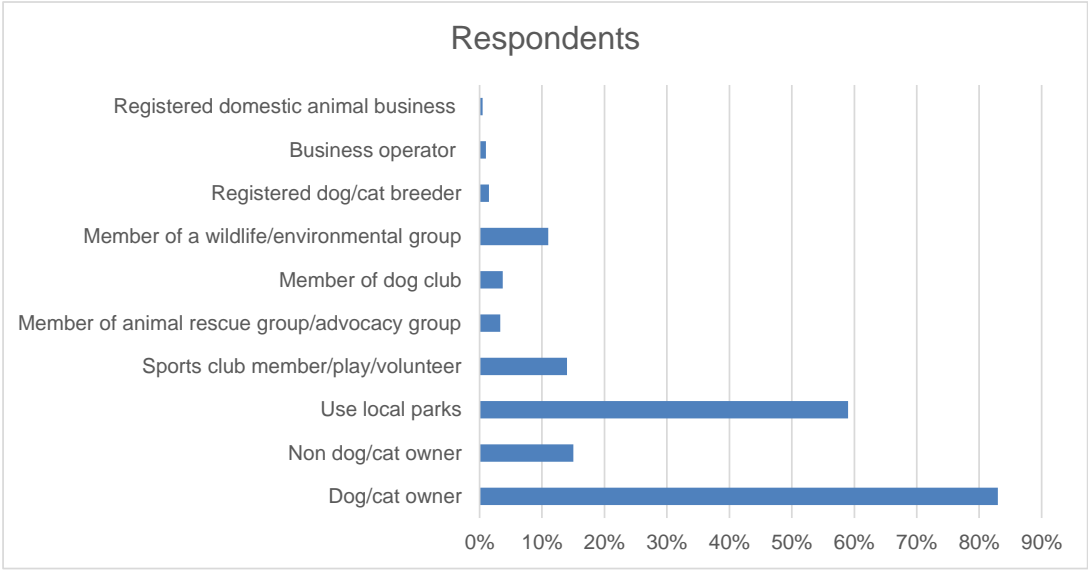
# Who we engaged with

## 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](https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au)

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



THIS PAGE WAS LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

4 April 2025

Hello,

## **Submission – Nillumbik draft DAMP**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft DAMP. I have attached some comments which I trust are helpful.

### **About me**

I have worked with Australia's expert on cat and dog management, Emeritus Professor [REDACTED], the [REDACTED] of the Australian Pet Welfare Foundation.

I am abreast of research from around the world, and in Australia, on animal cat management methods and have knowledge of effective dog management methods.

### **Opportunities for improvement in the DAMP**

The draft focuses heavily on reactive compliance/enforcement/punishment, rather than assisting the community with pet-related issues. I believe there are opportunities to improve the proposed DAMP, as some aspects will not lead to the positive outcomes that some people may be anticipating.

In particular, the proposal (which is presented in the draft as already existing) to introduce a 24 hour cat curfew is not based on best practice in cat management.

I understand that many residents care about wildlife and our Green Wedge, as do I. I founded and ran a revegetation group in Diamond Creek. I know many wildlife rescuers.

However, research has shown that cats in urban and peri urban areas do not impact wildlife populations. In some cases, they provide a protective factor. People's increasingly negative attitudes towards cats, and their perception that cats impact wildlife populations, is largely based on the consistently-negative and misleading information that has been produced by the 'war on cats', which was schemed up in 2015.

I urge the council not to proceed with a 24 hour curfew and to most definitely not act as if it is already in place. It will increase costs, without achieving any positive outcomes.

At the very least, I urge the council to fully assess the likely costs and impacts on vulnerable people, including those living with disability, mental health issues, social isolation, financial disadvantage, as well as local vets and shelter workers, before proceeding further.

The Domestic Animals Act already has provisions in place for people who do not like cats visiting their property.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

## Contents

### Summary

| Topic   |
|---|
| Introduction  |
| General comments on draft DAMP  |
| Online survey   |
| Increased costs to council of 24 hour cat curfew  |
| Why some people support ill-informed lifetime lockdowns   |
| Cats, dogs and wildlife – it's not what people think  |
| Changes that would help wildlife  |
| Companion cats are affected by the 'war on 'wild' cats'   |
| Provisions already exist to address visiting cats   |
| Confining cats and dogs are very different  |
| Impact on people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landlords</li> <li>Tenants</li> <li>Women's safety</li> <li>Financially disadvantaged</li> <li>People with disability and mental health issues</li> <li>Pound staff</li> <li>Local vets and nurses</li> <li>Residents' rates</li> </ul> |
| Cat exercise parks  |
| Walking cats on leads and protecting them from dogs   |
| Conclusion  |
| References  |

## General comments on draft DAMP

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Responsible ownership of dogs and cats           | <p>'Provision of additional educational programs on responsible pet ownership to kindergartens and/or schools'</p> <p>Animal Welfare Victoria already provides this. Additional programs by Nillumbik will not be a good use of resources.</p>   |
| Over population of dogs and cats                 | <p><i>'Mandatory desexing of cats prior to registration'</i></p> <p>Research has found this provides no animal welfare benefits and does not reduce overpopulation of cats. Councils which have it in place are considering revoking it.</p> <p>A more effective initiative is to provide a free cat desexing program, targeted to areas of high impound rates, people on low income and rural areas where stray cats are less likely to be desexed.</p> <p><i>'Exploring desexing programs available through grants'</i></p> <p>I support this initiative. However, competition for AWW grants is considerable. Any desexing program needs to be targeted to areas of high impound rate and greater financial need</p>  |
| Registration and identification of dogs and cats | <p>Again, this is solely a reactive compliance/enforcement approach.</p> <p>Although it is a legal requirement, actions such as 'Obtain new registrations as part of investigative case work' are solely a means by which to increase registration for registration's sake. They do not provide a community or animal welfare benefit and are widely perceived as revenue raising.</p> <p>Very few animals wear council registration tags, as they provide little benefit. They do not enable people who find an animal to reunite them directly, as access to the database is needed.</p> <p><i>Recommendation:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Allow payment plans for people who cannot pay for pound release fees upfront</li> </ol> <p>As per best practice in animal management, adopt an 'impound as option of last resort approach'. In areas where a cat or dog is found, scan them for a microchip in situ. If no microchip is present, doorknock the community to determine their address. Impound as last resort option, not to raise revenue from fines. Ie change 'Dogs with current Council registration and wearing Council issued identification tags with no previous history are successfully reunited directly with owners where possible to 'Dogs <u>and cats</u> with current Council registration <u>and wearing Council issued identification tags</u> with no previous history are successfully reunited directly with owners where possible to'.</p> |
| Dogs creating nuisance                           | <p><i>Recommendation:</i></p> <p>Encourage people who use ovals with their dogs to work together and develop a roster to conduct 'poo patrols', especially before ovals are used by organised sports</p>   |
| Cats creating nuisance                           | See below  |
| Pet expo   | The pet expo is an expensive event. It is a 'dog expo', rather than a 'pet expo',  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | offers little to people with animals other than dogs.   |
| Off and on-leash areas and signage   | <p><i>Recommendation:</i><br/>Restore access to ovals for off-leash dogs. Dog parks are inadequate and often the location of fights, as people who haven't trained their dog use them and don't adequately supervise them.</p> <p>Encourage regular oval users to develop a roster for poo patrols, especially before sports events.</p>  |
| 4. Programs to address over population rates and any high euthanasia rates | <p>'To address over population, Council works in partnership with the Cat Protection Society to promote desexing programs which aim to reduce the number of unwanted cats in the community and prevent further over-population.'</p> <p>'Promotion' is not adequate. Research by the Australian Pet Welfare Foundation (APWF) via its Community Cat Program has found that free and targeted desexing programs are the cheapest and most effective way of reducing stray cat numbers.</p> <p>'To address the overpopulation of cats and promote responsible pet ownership, the Council has implemented mandatory desexing of cats prior to registration'.</p> <p>Mandatory desexing programs are not effective. Free and subsidised desexing programs are.</p> <p><i>Recommendation:</i><br/>Develop and market free and subsidised cat desexing program, targeted to areas of high intake and to people on low incomes. Consult with the APWF on implementing this.</p> <p>'....cat traps will be provided to help reduce the number of stray and feral cats in the community.'</p> <p>Reactive trapping does not reduce homeless cat numbers. If it did, Nillumbik would have no homeless cats. Free and subsidised desexing programs are needed.</p> |
| Page 11 – 24 hour cat curfew   | <p>Nillumbik Shire Council has current orders in place that require cats to be confined to the owner's property under a 24 hour cat curfew'</p> <p>I suspect this will be surprising news to every Nillumbik resident, especially in light of the online survey which sought people's feedback on this and made no reference to it being in place already. Has this been copied and pasted from another council's DAMP?</p> <p>I do not support a 24 hour curfew.</p> <p>Nillumbik cannot afford the economic impact of such a scheme, which provides no benefits and only increases costs.</p>   |

## Additional suggestions

### Fireworks

Fireworks in Nillumbik still occur annually during two organised events – Diamond Creek Fair and Eltham Festival – and ad hoc when people let off illegal fireworks.

Whenever they occur, they cause distress to many animals, including wildlife, horses, farmed animals and dogs, as well as distress to people with PTSD, people with dementia and autistic people.

Dogs inevitably flee their property, as the notification area is far too small. Fireworks in Diamond Creek can be heard in Eltham and vice versa.

Confinement inside does not address the issue, as animals are still distressed and at risk of heart attacks and death. Dogs have been known to crash through plate glass windows, scratch through doors, rip out power points and risk causing house fires. Horses have been known to bolt at high speed into barbed wire fences and suffer serious and expensive injuries.

#### *Recommendation:*

Prohibit the release of fireworks in Nillumbik during organised events, including at the Diamond Creek Fair and Eltham Festival. This will facilitate people to comply with the requirement to have dogs on their premises.

## 24 hour cat curfew - Introduction

### Introduction

I do not support a 24 hour cat curfew because:

- People's views about cats have been negatively impacted by the 10-year-long 'war on cats', from which only negative media sound bites and computer-based modelling have been published
- Online surveys do not receive a representative sample of feedback from Nillumbik residents and are usually based on a very small % of residents
- People have likely based their opinions on the misleading information promulgated by the 'war on cats'
- It has not considered whether existing lifetime lockdowns in other councils have had any measurable benefit for ratepayers
- It has failed to consider the costs involved of enforcing a lifetime lockdown, which will likely be considerable for the council and, therefore, ratepayers
- It is not possible for Council to enforce as other councils with lifetime lockdowns have found. They don't bother. Council is not able to enforce the night curfew, either. It is solely 'enforced' by vigilante neighbours complaining about cats
- Provisions already exist for people to address neighbours' cats who visit their property when they don't want them to
- It will have no overall benefit for wildlife
- It will require a 'time sharing' roster of local streets, so that cats can be safely walked on leads without the risk of attack by off-lead dogs
- Where will the cat exercise parks be located? They need to be fully contained, with double-layer of wire fences and rooves, away from where dogs can walk
- It will unfairly impact:



- People who rent (predicted to increase from 2021 census of 9% of residents due to ongoing housing unaffordability)
- People who are financially disadvantaged
- People with disability and mental health issues who are unable to walk their cat on a lead
- children
- It will cause further stress and potentially family breakdown, at a time when residents need their companion animals more than ever, due to the many stressors of covid
- It may put women's safety at risk
- Dogs were originally confined as they can attack and kill people. Cats don't do this. The 'dogs are confined; why shouldn't cats' argument is based on a false premise
- Confining a cat is far more difficult and expensive than confining a dog
- Cats who cannot adjust will be surrendered and, likely, killed
- It will cause additional mental health damage and trauma to shelter workers and local vets and increase their risk of suicide

If lifetime lockdown is introduced, and I do hope it isn't, I urge the council to:

- Include grandfathering arrangements, where lifetime lockdown only applies to cats who are acquired after the lockdown is introduced
- Specify that cats can be walked off their property on a lead
- Implement a 'time-sharing' roster so that cats can be safely walked along local streets on a lead without fear of being attacked and killed by dogs, including off-lead dogs and dogs who are on-lead but who break away from their walker when they see a cat on a lead
- Provide cat- and dog-proof cat exercise parks in quiet and pleasant areas, away from dogs, traffic and people. They will need to be audited daily for gaps, or risk the council being sued
- Provide financial assistance or no-interest loans for people to install cat enclosures or cat-proof fencing, so that families can stay together.

Please find full details, including references, below.

**Summary**

I urge the council to not impose 24 hour curfews on residents and their valued cat companions.

## Key issues included in draft DAMP

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Summary          | <p>'Cats creating nuisance' is the only item listed, with 'address issues of cats' the main 'issue' identified. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Outside of property during daytime and at night time, in breach of existing curfew</li><li>• Preying on wildlife and native animals</li><li>• Causing a nuisance to residents</li><li>• Feral and stray cats</li><li>• Protection of the Green Wedge</li><li>• Educate cat owners on how to build cat enclosures and provide Enrichment</li></ul>  |
| Incorrect issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Outside of property during daytime</b> and at night time, in breach of existing curfew: Cats are allowed to not be confined during the day. Nillumbik currently has a night-time curfew</li><li>• <b>Preying on wildlife and native animals</b> – as shown below, all field-based research has found that cats in urban and peri urban areas, like Nillumbik do not have an impact on wildlife populations. Continuing to focus on this issue, without addressing the key threatening processes Nillumbik wildlife face, will not achieve positive outcomes</li><li>• Causing a nuisance [sic] to residents:</li><li>• <b>Feral and stray cats</b> The mention of 'feral' cats in this document</li><li>• Protection of the Green Wedge: duplication of 'cats preying on wildlife' issue</li><li>• <b>Educate cat owners on how to build cat enclosures and provide Enrichment</b> Education already widely exists</li></ul> |

## Small sample size of survey

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| Summary | <p>I note that a very small number of residents of the total population were surveyed to develop the idea of imposing a lifetime lockdown for cats.</p> <p>This is not representative nor statistically valid.</p> <p>It is concerning that a proposal that will have a significant impact on many people would be made on the opinions of such a small number of residents.</p> |
|---------|--|

## No to 24 hour cat curfew

## Increased costs to council

### Introduction



If the council intends for this law to be upheld, there will be significant additional costs.

As this is not just an administrative issue, but involves sentient animals who need to be cared for in accordance with existing and future legislation and Codes, the costs are more significant than for something like fences.

### Anticipated costs

A Victorian council has calculated the costs associated with each stage of an animal's journey through the council/pound system for cats who are:

- Collected, impounded, cared for for the mandatory eight day period then killed
- Collected, impounded, cared for then reclaimed by their family after the average length of stay
- Collected, impounded, cared for then adopted by new family.

They have determined the following costs.

| Outcome  | \$ per cat at 2021 |
|--|--------------------|
| Killed   | \$625              |
| Reclaimed by family after average length of stay | \$390              |
| Adopted to new family*                           |                    |
| Male cat   | \$1,015            |
| Female cat                                       | \$1,115            |

\*Includes desexing, vaccination, microchipping and common health care needs

**Fines won't recoup costs**

The council will be on a perpetual cycle of having to pay for trapping, transport, impoundment and killing.

Some of these costs may be recouped by fining a family who reclaims their cat. However, these will not recover all costs.

No costs will be recoverable from people whose cats are not microchipped, registered and who do not reclaim their cat.

Some people will obtain a 'free to good home' cat to 'replace' their impounded and killed cat. This cat will likely not be desexed. If the family doesn't desex, microchip or register them, when they are next impounded, there will be more costs for the council, as the cat won't be traceable.

These undesexed cats will likely add to the stray cat population.

In addition, the extra cats impounded and surrendered due to the lockdown will further worsen the council's euthanasia statistics, which will be publicised more widely and more regularly once new Victorian laws commence.

**Pound costs will increase due to reduced adoption opportunities**



Cats who have been impounded, or surrendered, because they cannot cope with lockdown will have reduced adoption opportunities.

They will have a longer length of stay at the council's pound, with subsequent increases in costs to the pound provider and then to the council.

**Existing councils who have lifetime lockdowns do not enforce them**

The few Victorian councils that already have lifetime lockdown do not appear to enforce the legislation.

This is likely due to the high costs.

Is there any point introducing legislation that cannot be enforced, due to complexity and inadequate resources within the council? Is there any point of initially appeasing people who have loud voices when there are more important issues facing the community?

Lack of enforcement will likely cause more frustration in the community, as

we see happening with people who don't pick up their dog's faeces or who have them off a lead in on-lead areas when out walking.

- Impact on staff time** A lifetime lockdown will significantly increase the amount of time compliance officers spend:
- responding to calls regarding cats
  - arranging traps
  - delivering and collecting traps to complainants
  - transporting cats to the pound.

**Example – Maroondah**

After Maroondah introduced a night time cat curfew, the number of calls staff responded to about cats nearly doubled (183% increase). The number of cats impounded more than doubled (107%).

| Financial year                            | Calls related to cats | Cats impounded |
|---|-----------------------|----------------|
| <b>2012/2013</b><br>(before night curfew) | 92                    | 75             |
| <b>2016/2017</b><br>(after night curfew)  | 260                   | 155            |
| <b>% increase</b>                         | 183                   | 107            |

Naturally, this means staff are not available for other duties. More staff may need to be employed, further increasing council costs of the lockdown.

- Laws already exist to address visiting cats** People may not be aware that residents can, already, request a humane trap from the council if they are upset by a neighbour's cat visiting their property more than twice (Domestic Animals Act 1994).

A lifetime lockdown will achieve little more than exists already, but at great cost.

- Difficult to enforce** If you speak to residents in the few councils that have introduced lifetime lockdowns, you will hear that they are rarely enforced.

This is likely partly due to cost and difficulty.

The same will occur in Nillumbik. especially as we are more under-resourced than many councils.

This will likely frustrate residents more than if the existing night curfew remains.

Is there any point of having another law if council doesn't have the funds to enforce it? It will lead to unrealistic expectations amongst residents and, likely, more frustration than living with the existing laws.

## Why some people support ill-informed lifetime lockdowns

### Summary

The most commonly-cited reasons for people supporting lifetime lockdown are:

- The incorrect belief that cats in urban and peri urban areas are impacting native wildlife populations
- The 'dogs have to be confined, why shouldn't cats' attitude
- The lack of awareness that provisions already exist if a neighbour's cat is visiting someone else's property and it upsets that person.

Each of these is discussed below.

## Cats, dogs and wildlife – it's not what people think

### Urban and peri urban cats do not affect wildlife populations

Not a single peer-reviewed research project has found that the presence, or absence, of cats impacts wildlife populations in urban and peri urban parts of Australia.

Studies have, however, found that wildlife are heavily affected by us destroying their habitat.

Dogs are also known to be an issue.

### Cats and mammals

**Medium-sized mammals are not impacted by cats; Antechinus are more prevalent when cats are present**

A 10 year Perth study (Lilith et al 2010) investigated species diversity across three different bushland areas where cats were either:

- prohibited;
- required to be inside at night and wear a bell; or
- unregulated.

The study found that medium-sized mammals, such as Brush-tailed Possums and Southern Brown Bandicoots, were *not impacted by the presence or absence of cats*.

The smaller Mardo (*Antechinus flavipes*), which is highly susceptible to cat predation, was in *higher numbers in areas where cats were unregulated*.

### Cats and birds

**Increased housing density and distance from bushland causes declines in bird populations, not cats**

A Perth study found that cat density has no effect on passerine bird populations.

Decreasing bird populations were associated with *increasing urbanisation and housing density*, and increasing distance from bushland. The study concluded that *habitat destruction and degradation*, rather than cats, were the main factors impacting on birds (Grayson et al 2007).



#### **Cats protect nests**

A Sydney study of nest predation in 24 forest patches in the Sydney metropolitan area found that *no nests were attacked by cats* (Matthews et al 1999). Black Rats, Ringtail Possums, Antechinus species and other birds were the main predators. Nest predation was *reduced when cats were present*.

#### **Many birds killed by cats would not survive to breed**

Most of the bird species that cats kill have an average life span of 2-4 years in the wild. This means that 25-50% are dying of other causes every year and would not survive to the next breeding season (Australian Government Department of the Environment and Energy, 2017).

#### **Cats do not cause additional deaths, as most birds caught by cats are unhealthy**

Research also shows that birds caught by cats in urban areas are on average less healthy than birds killed by flying into windows and cars (Baker et al 2008, Møller and Errotzøe 2000). The researchers concluded that most cat-related bird deaths are not additive to the number dying each year. That is, *cats did not cause additional deaths of birds than would have occurred through other means*, in most cases.

#### **Most birds caught by cats would have died from other means**

In the UK, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has similarly concluded that there is [no scientific evidence that cats are causing bird populations to decline](#). It, too, highlights that most birds who were killed by cats would have died from other causes before the next breeding season.

#### **Habitat loss is affecting bird populations**

Just as in Australia, UK research has found that declines in bird populations are usually caused by habitat change or loss.

**Cats mainly predate introduced and common species**



A further study (Franklin et al 2018) found that the main prey items of cats are mice, followed by rats, small lizards, then common species of birds.

A Brisbane City Council analysis of the stomach contents of 25 cats found only one species – the Black Rat (Brisbane City Council 2015).

Lifetime lockdown  
will increase  
secondary poisoning  
of wildlife



If cats are subjected to lifetime lockdown, predation of mice and rats in neighbourhoods will reduce. Whilst mice and rats are usually nocturnal, cats do catch and kill them during the day.

Most people are intolerant of mice and rats in their homes or, if they have chickens, on their properties at all.

Whilst there are recommended strategies that will prevent mice and rats coming inside or entering chicken coops, a review of social media posts in relation to mice and rats shows that very few people implement them. Instead, they resort to using rodenticide – either by themselves or by hiring an ‘exterminator.’

#### Species affected by secondary poisoning

Rodenticides kill native wildlife through secondary poisoning. This includes [Barn Owls](#), Boobook Owls (Lohr 2018), Kites, Tawny Frogmouths, Kookaburras, Wedge-tailed Eagles (Pay et al, 2021), other meat-eating birds and likely reptiles (Lettoof, 2020).

In autumn and winter, when mice and rats may come inside warm homes, wildlife rescuers see a spike in the number of poisoned wildlife coming into care. Most die. Very slowly. Very painfully.

Research has indicated that anticoagulant rodenticides pose a serious threat to native predators in Australia, particularly in species using urban and peri-urban areas, such as those in Nillumbik, and species with large home ranges. (Lohr 2018).

Rodenticides also build-up in animals over generations, with one generation passing on the poison to their young.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Other research doesn't measure actual impact</b> | <p>Other than the research studies cited, existing research related to cat predation is based solely on modelling or hypothetical predation studies.</p> <p>It does not measure the <i>actual</i> impact companion cats may have on native wildlife populations.</p> <p>Funding is needed to conduct this research. Funding for research is difficult to obtain and is mostly from the government.</p> <p>Given the 'war on cats', this is unlikely to be forthcoming. Most current research related to cats would seem to be solely to provide justification for the 'war on cats'. This is why research related to the 'war on cats' is more recent than many other research papers.</p> <p>Cat – and wildlife - behaviour is unlikely to have changed since research that was not part of the 'war on cats' was conducted.</p> <p>In the absence of any data that urban and peri urban cats impact on native wildlife populations, it would be inappropriate to introduce lifetime lockdown on the basis of the 'cats kill wildlife' argument.</p> |
|---|---|

**Dogs more of a  
threat than cats**



Research has found that dogs are responsible for more reported attacks on wildlife than cats (Holderness-Roddam et al, 2014). They concluded that dogs are a significant, but poorly recognised, threat to native wildlife in natural urban areas, second only to vehicles.

Data provided by Healesville Sanctuary's Australian Wildlife Hospital found that, of wildlife injured by a dog or cat, 59.3% were injured by a dog and 40.7% by a cat.

As there is no current 'war on dogs', the impacts of dogs on wildlife are not regularly highlighted in the media. This is leaving people with the false impression that dogs have no impact on wildlife when, in fact, research suggests that they harm wildlife more than cats.

Other studies have also determined that dogs may play a significant role in impacting wildlife, through disturbance and killing (Doherty et al 2017, Hughes and MacDonald 2013, Twardeck et al 2017).

This impact of dogs on wildlife is occurring in spite of existing laws that require dogs to be confined to their properties and to be walked on a lead except in off-lead areas.

## Changes that actually would help wildlife

### Summary

If the council and its residents truly care about wildlife, we would:

- **protect remaining habitat** – protect all remaining wildlife habitat. This would mean prohibiting subdivisions and destroying native trees. Nillumbik would need to not approve any subdivision or tree destruction and applicants would need to take all refused planning applications to VCAT
- **mandate indigenous plants** - require all residents to only have indigenous plants on their properties. Mandate that residents replicate, as far as possible, the mix of canopy trees, shrubs, under storey and ground covers that would have existed before their homes, workplaces and schools were built. Whilst this doesn't compensate for the building footprint, it would provide some wildlife habitat that our buildings and roads have destroyed. Lack of habitat (and water) is a key determining factor of whether wildlife can live in an area or not
- **mandate wildlife-safe water** - require all properties to have wildlife-safe sources of water at all times
- **prohibit residents from feeding wildlife**, as it:
  - disrupts animals' natural fear of humans
  - affects foraging behaviour
  - leads to unnatural groupings of animals close together
  - leads to unnatural behaviours
  - can lead to dependence on human-provided food sources
  - usually entails feeding food that is dangerous or unhealthy
  - can lead to spread of contagious diseases like beak and feather disease in parrots
  - can lead to lumpy jaw in macropods
  - can spread zoonotic diseases to people
- **mandate bird-safe windows** - require that all windows in all buildings are made bird-strike proof, as [New York City has done](#). Australian data is lacking, but in the US, an estimated one billion birds die from hitting building windows
- **prohibit rodenticides** - prohibit the use of rodenticides, which cause secondary poisoning to wildlife
- **mandate litter collection** - mandate that all residents must pick up any littered items they see which could harm wildlife (eg looped items such as face masks, plastic rings, elastic hair ties, fishing line), cut them and bin them
- **minimise new roads** - not build roads through wildlife habitat
- **enforce rendering assistance** - enforce the state law that anyone who hits wildlife with their vehicle must render assistance
- **prohibit new trails** – not build walking/cycling trails through habitat, due to the disturbance it causes to wildlife
- **reduce night time speed limits on wildlife roads** – reduce the speed limit of all local roads that cut through wildlife habitat to at least 40 km/h, as is done when children arrive at and leave school
- **include wildlife crossings and fences** - on wildlife roads, install wildlife crossings that are suitable for each species, with the associated necessary habitat to encourage their use, with land modifications and

fences to direct wildlife towards the crossings

When reading this list, I expect councillors, and most people, would likely not support these provisions, even though they would do more to protect wildlife than a lifetime lockdown for cats will, as it would impact our own lives.

If so, perhaps any concerns about wildlife only apply when it doesn't impact us and that the argument seeking a lifetime lockdown for cats to 'protect wildlife' is based on flawed premises and double standards - one for us so that our lives aren't impacted, one for other animals whose lives will be impacted significantly.

## Companion cats are affected by the 'war on (wild) cats'

### 'War on (wild) cats'

Urban cats are being affected by the federal government's so-called 'war on (wild) cats', which it devised in July 2015. I have been informed by a reliable source that this concept was devised by a group of politicians over lunch – not by scientists.

It aimed to kill 20 million wild cats, under the guise of protecting wildlife. Modelling later indicated that this is nearly 10 times the number of cats who may live Australia at any one time (Legge et al, 2017).

This highlights the lack of scientific rigour of this plan.

Since the 'war on cats' began, many attention-getting headlines of the estimated total number of animals (both introduced and native) that wild cats who live in the bush are believed to kill each year in Australia have been published.

These **estimates are based on modelling and hypothetical situations**, not actual numbers. The numbers aren't tailored to specific habitats, climates etc.

People's companion cats have been affected by this 'war', as people now believe that cats in urban and peri urban areas are impacting wildlife populations.

This is not true.

Unfortunately, the research has also failed to indicate whether this total number is significant for each species.

For example, each day, we all likely kill ants and other small insects, in large quantities. Is this having an impact on the overall population of ants and other insects?

Possibly not.

In some cases, wild cats are listed as a threatening process for some species. But for most species, habitat loss and climate change are the key threatening processes.

The regular headlines have led to people confusing the possible impact of wild cats with companion cats. They have also led to people failing to reflect upon the impacts to wildlife of our constant destruction of their habitat.

### Key threatening processes are not being addressed

Governments of all stripes, both state and national, have taken no meaningful action on the threatening process that affects most native species: degradation and destruction of habitat and climate change.

In fact, Australia continues to have the worst worldwide rate of deforestation amongst developed nations (World Wildlife Fund, 2021). It is the only

developed nation on the World Wildlife Fund's global list of deforestation hotspots.

Rates of deforestation and habitat destruction are so high that Koalas are predicted to become extinct in NSW (New South Wales Legislative Council, 2020).

One could therefore wonder what prompted the government to put cats in its spotlight, when taking action on deforestation would achieve far more for wildlife. Could it be that cats are being scapegoated, to earn 'green points'?

Nillumbik, too, is suffering loss of habitat, due to increased development and population growth.

As the research previously cited shows, it is this loss of habitat that is having the greatest impact on wildlife populations in urban areas – not cats.

**Suppression of  
research is  
occurring**



Scientists have raised the alarm that research findings that are not in accordance with governments' environmental policies are being suppressed, on a large scale (Driscoll et al 2021). They have stated that this is particularly occurring in relation to habitat loss and climate change.

What the public hears in terms of threats to wildlife is therefore very much focused on whether it aligns with government priorities, not whether it is the most significant environmental impact.

Because of the 'war on cats', cat-related information is more often being heard by people than research about the impacts of habitat loss and climate change, which are the key threatening processes for most wildlife.

This is likely further skewing people's perceptions of companion cats and wildlife.

**Threatened Species  
Commissioner**

When the government launched its 'war on cats', it created a new role, the Threatened Species Commissioner (TSC). In line with government priorities, the TSC has focused heavily on cats, ignoring the more pressing issues of land



clearing.

One of the TSC's KPIs was to 'increase Australians' acceptance of killing cats.'

It is questionable whether the TSC has achieved much for threatened species. It has, however, achieved the KPI of scapegoating and vilifying cats.

**Effect of constant vilification and scapegoating**



Any person, animal or minority group that has been targeted with vilification knows the outcomes: persecution, hatred, scapegoating and, ultimately, killing.

This is occurring right now with cats.

It is not cats who are causing the sixth wave of mass extinctions in the world. It is us, through our destruction of habitat and carbon emissions.

Although we know this, governments of all types continue to fail to take meaningful action. Instead, they scapegoat other animals.

## **Provisions already exist if people don't want cats visiting**

### **Introduction**

Provisions already exist for people who may be upset that a neighbour's cat is visiting their property, just as they exist if they are upset by a neighbour's barking dog.

A resident may legally trap a cat using a humane box trap and take them to the council's pound (Domestic Animals Act 1994, s23).

This case-by-case approach is similar to that which applies when someone is bothered by a neighbour's dog barking.

We wouldn't remove the voice boxes of all dogs, on the off chance that their barking may disturb a neighbour.

Similarly, I suggest that imposing a lifetime lockdown on all cats is needlessly extreme.

Not all residents are bothered by a neighbour's cat visiting them. In fact, it may be very welcomed, especially by elderly people who may spend long periods on their own, and children.

## Confining cats and dogs are completely different

### Why dogs were originally confined to their property

Some people say, 'Dogs have to be confined. Why not cats?'

Perhaps they are unaware that the reason dog confinement laws were introduced was because dogs were attacking, biting and killing people.

Cats rarely attack people and they don't kill. Most cats will flee, rather than attack, unless they are cornered. If cornered, the worst they can do is scratch or bite, both of which can be treated with prompt administration of antibiotics.

### Confining a cat is much harder than confining a dog

Confining a dog is much easier than confining a cat.

#### Dogs just need fences

Few dogs climb fences, climb trees or can jump onto sheds etc. Most dogs simply require fences to be confined. Dog-proof fences already exist on almost all urban properties.

This is not the case with cats.

#### Adult cats can get through 4cm gaps

Dog and cat anatomy is vastly different.

Cats have 'floating clavicles'. This means that their body width does not determine the gaps through which they can squeeze.

In fact, if a gap is large enough for a cat to get the widest part of their skull through, they can get their entire body through it, as shown in this [startling video](#).

The average adult cat can squeeze through a gap of just 4cm.

Confining a cat requires vastly more work – and expense – than confining a dog.

**Cats may not adjust** Some cats will not adjust to lifetime lockdown, especially those who have led a daytime inside/outside lifestyle.

Most people frown on dogs being kept permanently in a small backyard and not being taken for walks off the property.

Cats have similar highly-attuned senses as dogs. Keeping a cat permanently inside or confined to a property is no less harmful as doing that to a dog.

*Potential health and behavioural issues*

Cats may develop a range of health and behavioural issues from sudden confinement including:

- spraying
- toileting inappropriately
- depression
- scratching furniture and carpets
- constant meowing
- overgrooming
- urinary tract infections and blockages, which can be expensive to treat and may be fatal in males
- waking people up
- pacing around the house, similar to the stereotypical behaviour of animals confined in zoos who do not have adequate behavioural enrichment
- constantly trying to get out
- etc.

This may lead to them being surrendered, with resultant emotional harm to the cat's family (especially if children are involved or if the cat was a key source of support), staff at the council's pound and staff at local vet clinics.

**Gradual confinement is needed**

The RSPCA acknowledges that a cat who is used to having freedom and who is suddenly confined may suffer. It states that they may become distressed, display behavioural problems and that their health and welfare may be compromised.

If a cat is going to be subjected to confinement, it states that a gradual reduction in the amount of freedom they have will allow them to better adjust.

Imposing a sudden lockdown will not allow cats to adjust to confinement.

*Recommendation:*

Should a 24 hour curfew ever be implemented, and for Nillumbik's budget I do hope it isn't, exclude cats who are currently registered. Allow a 24 hour implementation period.

**Cost of confinement**

Most properties have fences which are sufficient to confine dogs. Living with a dog, therefore, poses no additional costs to residents, including tenants.

This is not the case with cats.

For a cat to have any outside stimulation and to reduce the risk of health and behavioural issues, properties will need to be modified by:

- enclosing the whole back and front yard with cat-proof 'fence toppers'
- installing an escape-proof enclosure.

All options will likely cost thousands or tens of thousands of dollars.

How will people be able to pay for this with short notice?

## Impact of lifetime cat lockdown on people

**Impact on landlords** Although landlords are currently enjoying low vacancy rates, they will likely be asked by tenants to build enclosures or cat-proof back yards, so that people with cats can continue living there.

Naturally, they can choose not to. If they choose to support their tenant, it will pose additional costs to them.

**Impact on renters** 2021 census data indicates that nearly 10% of Nillumbik residents live in rental accommodation.

The Victorian government has recently changed rental laws to make them more pet-friendly, for the wellbeing of people.

Landlords and real estate agents can no longer impose blanket 'no pet clauses'. Tenants can take the matter to VCAT if a landlord unreasonably prohibits companion animals on the property.

At a time when tenants can finally enjoy the many health benefits of companion animals, a lifetime lockdown will potentially deny them those benefits.

We are experiencing a rental housing crisis already, with considerable competition for rental properties.

If landlords refuse to enclose their properties with cat-proof netting or install cat enclosures, lifetime lockdown may, once again, lead to people having to choose between having a home or keeping a family member.

**Impact on women's  
safety**



If the council fails to implement a 'time sharing' roster for cats and dogs to be safely walked on leads off their property, people may feel the need to walk their cat at night, when fewer dogs are around.

This could jeopardise women's safety and increase sexual assaults and murders.

**Impact on financially disadvantaged people**

Confining a cat to a property while still providing adequate quality of life, with access to fresh air, sunshine and, ideally, dirt and grass, will require properties to be modified.

This may include:

- cat-proof netting installed at the top of fences on the property boundaries
- cat enclosures
- enclosing part of the property eg deck, patio.

This may cost thousands or tens of thousands of dollars.

This will likely be beyond the means of many Nillumbik residents.

If their cat doesn't cope with 24 hour confinement inside, they will have to choose between staying with their home or staying with their family member.

Victorian rental laws were changed to avoid people being put in this appalling situation.

COVID-19 has had a significant financial impact on many people. Now is not the time to add further financial stress to people – or potentially break up families.

**Impact on people with disability or mental health issues**



People with disability and mental health issues may not be able to walk a dog. For this reason, cats are fantastic companions. Cats can go outside during the day to exercise themselves, obtain stimulation and sunshine and come inside at night.

If lifetime lockdown is imposed, however, and the cat doesn't adjust to constant confinement, people with disability and mental health issues who are unable to walk their cat may suddenly be denied the many health benefits of animal companionship that they are, at present, enjoying.

This seems terribly cruel, given that these people may already have challenging lives.





**Impact on pound  
staff**



If lifetime lockdown is introduced and someone's cat does not adapt to an indoor-only lifestyle, they will most likely:

- surrender them to the council's pound, or
- ask a local vet to kill them.

If they can only be rehomed to where they can live as an indoor-outdoor cat during the daytime, their adoption opportunities will be restricted considerably. They have a greater risk of being killed at the council's pound.

**Mental health impacts**

Being required to kill healthy animals as part of employment has a profound impact on people who work with companion animals. Shelter and pound staff develop various mental health issues including depression, anxiety, substance abuse, post-traumatic stress, perpetration-induced traumatic stress and increased risk of suicide (Rohlf & Bennett 2005; Scotney et al. 2015; Whiting and Marion 2011).

In the USA, the work-place suicide rate for the animal shelter sector has reached number one ranking, comparable to other protective service professions, such as police and firefighting (Tiesman et al. 2015).

**Impact on local vets  
and nurses**



Some people, when surrendering their animals, decide to end the animal's life as well, as they may perceive that the animal is 'better off dead' than without them or at a shelter.

Indeed, if lifetime lockdown is imposed, a cat who can't cope with lifetime lockdown has a higher risk of being killed.

People who care about their cat may take them to the local vet, rather than the council's pound, and ask that they kill them.

**Vets and nurses suffer psychological damage from killing healthy animals**

Whilst vets and nurses regularly euthanase animals who are irredeemably suffering, killing a healthy animal has a severe psychological toll and can lead to perpetrator-induced traumatic stress (Whiting T and Marion C 2011).

In Australia, suicide rates for veterinarians are four times higher than for the general public (SBS News 2020, ABC News 2019).

Veterinarians are more likely to suffer from depression and anxiety, and have higher rates of suicide, than other professions (Fritschi et al 2009; Platt et al 2010). Ending the lives of animals is implicated in increasing psychological damage and suicide risk in vets (Bartram and Baldwin, 2008, 2010). The more frequent the killing, the greater the risk of depression and suicide (Tran et al, 2014).

*Example*

Recently, a person took their healthy animal to a vet clinic and asked them to kill him as the person was 'sick of him.' He refused to allow the animal to be rehomed. This left all the nurses all in tears, as they were forced to execute a healthy and young animal who wanted to live.

If the council imposes lifetime lockdown for cats, it will likely be perpetrating additional psychological injury on local vets and nurses.

**Council will increase risk of suicide to vets and nurses**

With a likely increase in cat surrenders, the council will be increasing the risk of psychological injury, and suicide, to local employees. Is this an acceptable outcome, given that laws already exist to address unwanted cat visitors?

**Impact on residents  
due to higher rates  
or reduced services**



The curfew will increase council costs. This will lead to reduction in services in other areas, or rate increases.

The council will likely be asked to provide traps to more residents. This requires council staff time and resources to:

- purchase more traps
- increase the available storage for traps
- receive and process each query
- retrieve traps from storage areas and supply to the complainant
- collect and deliver cats to the pound whenever a complainant has trapped a cat and drive back
- return traps to storage
- sign off on the customer request.

Has the council considered the extra customer service requests that will be made if it introduces lifetime lockdown? And the impact this will have on people's rates? And how residents will feel about

- increased rates, or
- reduced services in other areas?

## Walking cats on leads

### Introduction

People with confident cats may be able to teach them to walk on a harness and lead. This won't be possible for timid cats, as they will likely fear walking in open areas like footpaths where people, and dogs, may approach them.

### Time-sharing of streets between cat and dogs



For cats to be safely walked on a lead, they will need to be protected from off-lead dogs.

Dogs can, do and will chase, attack, maul and kill cats.

Given that we frequently see complaints about people walking their dog off-lead, and that dogs regularly escape their property, how will the council protect cats' safety when walking on a lead?

When connected to their person by a lead, they won't be able to sprint up a tree or under a house, both of which they can do when 'free'.

Their lead could get entangled. A dog can kill them within seconds.

I believe there will need to be a time-sharing roster of streets, so that cats can safely be walked at a time when dogs aren't likely to be around.

How will this work? Cats can be walked until midday and dogs after midday on the first Monday Wednesday and Friday and Sunday of the month? Whilst cats can be walked after midday and dogs walked before midday on the first Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday of the month? Then switch for the second week of the month?

Something for the council to consider.

#### Cat off-lead parks



I understand that 13 off-lead areas are available for dogs in Nillumbik.

If people with cats are going to continue paying rates, it is only fair that they are provided with safe areas where they can exercise their cats off-lead and ensure they can express natural behaviours, without the risk of attack by dogs.

These will need to:

- be located away from pedestrians, cars, dogs and people
- be made of dog-proof wire, including an inner wire frame as well as a separate outer wire frame so that dogs cannot injure cats in the park
- have no holes more than 2cm, to cater for both kittens and adult cats, given that cats can squeeze through very small spaces due to their floating clavicles, as previously stated
- have an escape-proof roof
- have double gates to ensure not cat can escape
- include trees for climbing and bushes for cats to hide in if feeling unsafe
- have dog-proof gates.

Has the council considered where they will be? And the cost of building and maintaining these?

## Conclusion

### Summary

I do hope Council will become more informed of effective dog and cat management methods. The sole focus on reactive, compliance-based approaches suggests there is room for improvement in this area.

In particular, I urge Council not to introduce a lifetime lockdown for cats.

Cats in urban and peri urban areas do not have an overall impact on native wildlife. They cause fewer wildlife attacks than dogs.

Provisions already exist for people to address a neighbour's cat who visits their property.

It will unreasonably affect people who rent, people with disability, people who are financially disadvantaged, council pound staff, local vets and nurses, and compliance officers.

It will pose a risk to women's safety.

It will add to council costs.

It will be difficult to enforce and may lead to resident frustration that it is not being enforced.

If, despite all this, the council does wish to explore a lifetime lockdown further, I urge the council to:

- determine whether this has had any measurable benefits (other than increased costs) in other councils that have imposed lifetime lockdown
- exempt existing cats from the new law, to reduce surrenders and the tearing apart of families. This is what the ACT has done when imposing lifetime lockdown in bushy suburbs
- include a 24 hour introductory period
- include cats being walked on a lead, the same as for dogs
- devise a time-sharing roster for cats and dogs being walked along local streets on a lead
- build secure cat exercise parks in suitable quiet areas.

Yours sincerely,



## References

ABC News (2019) Veterinarians abandon profession as suicide rate remains alarmingly high, accessed August 2020, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-01-13/vet-shortage-as-suicide-rates-high/10708686>.

Australian Department of the Environment and Energy. What have we learned from banding studies? <http://www.environment.gov.au/science/bird-and-bat-banding/about-banding/banding-studies> (accessed 15/12/17).

Baker PJ, Molony SE, Stone E, Cuthill IC, Harris S. Cats about town: is predation by free-ranging pet cats *Felis catus* likely to affect urban bird populations? *Ibis*, 2008; 150: 86-99.

Bartram DJ and Baldwin DS. 2008, Veterinary surgeons and suicide: influences, opportunities and research directions. *Vet Rec.*, 162(2):36-40. doi: 10.1136/vr.162.2.36. PMID: 18192654.

Bartram DJ, Baldwin DS, 2010, Veterinary surgeons and suicide: a structured review of possible influences on increased risk. *Vet Rec.* 166(13):388-97. doi: 10.1136/vr.b4794. Erratum in: *Vet Rec.* 2010 Apr 10;166(15):451. PMID: 20348468.

Boone J.D., Miller P.S., Briggs J.R., Benka V.A.W., Lawler D.F., Slater M., Levy J.K. and Zawistowski S. (2019) "A long-term lens: cumulative impacts of free-roaming cat management strategy and intensity on preventable cat mortalities", *Frontiers in Veterinary Science*, 6, 238.

Brisbane City Council. The Invasive Times, Issue 4, October 2015-2016

Doherty T, Dickman C, Glen A, Newsome T, Nimmo D, Ritchie E, Vanak A, Wirsing A (2017), The global impacts of domestic dogs on threatened vertebrates, *Biological Conservation*, 210, 56-59

Domestic Animals Act 1994, section 23

Driscoll D, Garrard G, Kusmanoff A, Dovers S, Maron M, Preece N, Pressey R, Ritchie E (2021), Consequences of information suppression in ecological and conservation sciences, *Conservation Letters*, 14(1)

Franklin M, Rand J, Marston L, Morton J. Prey captured by owned cats and dogs in Australia. *Animals*, 2018

Fritschi L, Morrison D, Shirangi A and Day L, 2009, Psychological well-being of Australian veterinarians, *Australian Veterinary Journal*, 87(3):76-81

Grayson J, Calver M, Lymbery A. Species richness and community composition of passerine birds in suburban Perth: is predation by pet cats the most important factor? In: Lunney D, Eby P, Hutchings P, Burgin S, editors. *Pest or Guest: The Zoology of Overabundance*. Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales, Mosman, NSW, Australia, 2007: 195-207.

Holderness-Roddam B & McQuillan PB, (2014), Domestic dogs (*Canis familiaris*) as a predator and disturbance agent of wildlife in Tasmania, *Australasian Journal of Environmental Management*, 21:4, 441-452,

- Hughes, J., and Macdonald, D.W. (2013), A review of the interactions between free-roaming domestic dogs and wildlife. *Biological Conservation*. **157**(1): 341-351
- Lazenby B, Mooney N, Dickman C, Effects of low-level culling of feral cats in open populations: A case study from the forests of southern Tasmania, [Wildlife Research](#) 41(5):407
- Legge S, Murphy BP, McGregor H, Woinarski JCZ, Augusteyn J, Ballard G, Baseler M, Buckmaster T, Dickman C, Doherty T, Edwards G, Eyre T, Fancourt BA, Ferguson D, Forsyth DM, Geary WL, Gentle M, Gillespie G, Zew F, Enumerating a continental-scale threat: How many feral cats are in Australia? *Biological Conservation*, 206, 293-303
- Lettoof DC, Lohr MT, Busetti F, Bateman PW and Davis RA, Toxic time bombs: Frequent detection of anticoagulant rodenticides in urban reptiles at multiple trophic levels, *Science of the Total Environment*, 724, 2020, 138218
- Lilith M, Calver MC, Garkaklis M. Do cat restrictions lead to increased species diversity or abundance of small and medium sized mammals in remnant urban bushland? *Pacific Conservation Biology*, 2010: 16(3): 162-72 (accessible at: <http://researchrepository.murdoch.edu.au/id/eprint/6221/>, accessed 15/12/17).
- Lohr M (2018) Anticoagulant rodenticide exposure in an Australian predatory bird increases with proximity to developed habitat, *Science of the Total Environment*, 643, 2018 (134-144)
- Matthews A, Dickman CR, Major RE. The influence of fragment size and edge on nest predation in urban bushland. *Ecography*, 1999; 22: 349-56.
- Miller, P.S., Boone, J.D., Briggs, J.R., Lawler, D.F., Levy, J.K., Nutter, F.B., Slater, M. and Zawistowski, S. (2014) "Simulating free-roaming cat population management options in open demographic environments", *PLoS ONE*, 9, e113553.
- Mitsuhashi Y, Chamberlin AJ, Bigley KE, Bauer JE. Maintenance energy requirement determination of cats after spaying. *Br J Nutr*, 2011; 106 suppl: S135-8.
- Møller AP, Erritzøe J. Predation against birds with low immunocompetence. *Oecologia* 2000; 122: 500-4.
- New South Wales Legislative Council, 2020, Inquiry into koala populations and habitat studies in NSW, Report 3, June 2020
- Pay, JM, Katzner, JE, Hawkins CE, Barmuta LA, Brown WE, Wiersma JM, Koch AJ, Mooney NJ, Cameron EZ (2021), Endangered Australian top predator is frequently exposed to anticoagulant rodenticides, *Science of The Total Environment*, 788, 147641
- Platt B, Hawton K, Simkin S, Mellanby RJ. 2012, Suicidal behaviour and psychosocial problems in veterinary surgeons: a systematic review. *Soc Psychiatry Psychiatr Epidemiol*. 47(2):223-40.
- Rohlf V. and Bennett P.C. (2005) "Perpetration-induced traumatic stress in persons who euthanize nonhuman animals in surgeries, animal shelters, and laboratories", *Society and Animals*, 13: 201-19.



SBS News (2020) A look at Australia's Veterinarian Crisis, accessed Aug 2020,  
<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/insight/a-look-at-australia-s-veterinarian-crisis>.

Scotney R.L., McLaughlin D., Keates H.L. (2015) "A systematic review of the effects of euthanasia and occupational stress in personnel working with animals in animal shelters, veterinary clinics, and biomedical research facilities", *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, 247, 1121–1130.

Tiesman H.M.; Konda S.; Hartley D.; Menendez C.C.; Ridenour M. and Hendricks S. (2015) "Suicide in U.S. Workplaces, 2003-2010: A comparison with non-workplace suicides" *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 48(6), 674-682.

Tran Lily, Crane M, Phillips J, 2014, The distinct role of performing euthanasia on depression and suicide in veterinarians, *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, Vol 19(2), 123-132

Twardeck et al 2017, Fido, fluffy and wildlife conservation: the environmental consequence of domesticated animals, *Environmental Reviews*, May 2017

Whiting T and Marion C, 2011, Perpetration-induced traumatic stress — A risk for veterinarians involved in the destruction of healthy animals, *Canadian Veterinarian Journal*, 52(7): 794-796

World Wildlife Fund 2021, Deforestation Fronts: Drivers and Responses in a Changing World, WWF International 2021,

Ending the lives of animals is implicated in increasing psychological damage and suicide risk in vets (Bartram and Baldwin, 2008, 2010). The more frequent the killing, the greater the risk of depression and suicide (Tran et al, 2014).

Speech – Frankston Council – 23 August 2021

Won't be a sneaky way of trapping stray cats – numbers who need to be trapped and killed

Impact on workers – increasing risk of suicide, potentially life-long PTSD, and other mental health issues

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>About me</b>  | <p>Thank you VERY much for hearing me tonight. Great info presented by [REDACTED].</p> <p>I have worked with Australia's expert in dog and cat management, Professor [REDACTED]. From that work, I have SOME understanding of what works, and what doesn't, in cat management.</p>  |
| <b>Costs to ratepayers have worked with</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Firstly, locking down cats for life will come at a considerable cost to the council. Based on what's happened in other councils, I'd expect your pound costs will more than double</li> <li>I believe you'll very likely have to employ additional AMOs, at an average salary of about \$74,000 per year</li> </ul>  |
| <b>People who are upset by neighbour's cat on their property</b> | <p>And these extra costs will be imposed on the council, even though <b>provisions already exist</b> under the Domestic Animals Act to respond to disgruntled residents about cats coming onto their property.</p> <p>A lifetime lockdown will merely <b>duplicate</b> existing laws, at a <b>very significant cost</b>.</p> <p>Also, The few councils that have imposed 24 hour curfews don't seem to enforce it, according to residents.</p> <p>Is there really any point of intro a law that's largely unenforceable and so costly? Enforcement similar to people picking up dog poo</p>   |
| <b>Stray cats</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I expect some people, perhaps some of your staff, may think that a 24 hour curfew will reduce the number of stray cats</li> <li>But, it won't.</li> <li>Research shows that to reduce the stray cat population using trapping, Frankston would need to spend between \$17 <b>MILLION</b> and <b>\$30 MILLION</b> just in the first year, and keep the same rate of trapping for 10 years</li> <li>This is actually why we still have stray cats - because no council has enough money to reduce their numbers using trapping.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Wildlife</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With respect to wildlife, people say 'bloody cats', 'cats will wildlife' 'cats are decimating our native wildlife'.</li> <li>But research shows in urban and peri urban areas they have NO OVERALL IMPACT. None. None for medium-sized mammals like possums. None for birds. Research has shown They actually protect birds nests from being attacked by rats. An one small native mammal, abt the size of a mouse, was in HIGHER numbers where cats were unregulated.</li> <li>Research shows that mice and rats are the animals who cat most commonly kill. Most people seem to use poison to kill mice and rats.</li> </ul> |

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
|                            | <p>These Poisoned rodents mice and rats then kill native wildlife through secondary poisoning. It's these wildlife who a 24 hour curfew will supposedly protect!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm VERY aware of the recent headlines that have been generated by the federal government's so-called 'war on feral cats'. This research is based on HYPOTHETICAL situations and MODELLING, and it's based on wild cats, not those in Frankston</li> <li>• What research has found to have a VERY significant impact on wildlife is habitt loss – due to development, more houses, killing trees and naïve vegetation.</li> <li>• So unless the council is going to prohibit ANY further development, (can't – developers will just go to VCAT), prohibit any further removal of trees and native vegetation, a 24 hour curfew will have ABSOLUTELY <b>NO</b> OVERALL BENEFIT for native wildlife</li> </ul> |
| <b>Dogs</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As █████ mentioned, research has been und to cause more wildlife harm than cats. Stats from Healesville Sanctuary show that 59.3% were injured by a dog and 40.7% by a cat.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Impact on residents</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 24 hour curfew will also impact on people and their cats. Many cats won't cope with suddenly being trapped inside 24 hours a day. They'll develop health and behavioural issues. They'll likely be surrendered and killed</li> <li>• Some people won't be able to afford enclosures</li> <li>• People with disability or mental health issues, who have adopted a cat for companionship, rather than a dog who needs walks, may be completely deprived of the MANY health benefits of animal companionship, as may renters</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Impact on workers</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finally, I'd ask that you please think about the human beings who work at your pound</li> <li>• There will, inevitably, be an significant increase in the number of healthy cats sent to the pound and not reclaimed, because residents can't afford the costs</li> <li>• Killing cats – and dogs – at pounds kills people.</li> <li>• People expected to o the kiln are deeply TRAUMATISED by it.</li> <li>• I've spoken to many people who have done this work.</li> <li>• They talk of every single animal they're expeted to kill as taking a bit of their soul. Many have to leave their job or the profession</li> <li>• Reserch shows they have more menhal health issues, more depression, more anxiety, more substance abuse ,develop PTSD. Ultimately, tragically, they have a much higher rate of suicide than the general population</li> </ul>                       |
|                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In summary, ,I ask you to please not impose a 24 hour cat curfew</li> <li>• Firstly, ,It will <b>significantly</b> increase your costs. I'd actually urge council to actually calculate how much the costs will increase before deciding on this</li> <li>• Secondly, WRT wildlife, most people's impressions of cats and wildlife are based on incorrect information. If more people knew the truth, I expect there would be less interest in lifetime lockdown</li> </ul>   |

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
|                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 24 hour curfew won't help wildlife and could increase the number killed, due to secondary poisoning from rat bait</li> <li>• Thirdly, Provisions already exist for people to address any cats coming onto their property. A 24 hour curfew isn't needed, legally</li> <li>• Fourthly, It will likely <b>INCREASE</b> the number of stray cats in Frankston, for reasons I don't have time to explain tonight</li> <li>• And, finally, it could well kill people</li> <li>• I ask you - is a 24 hour curfew, just to appease some people who are very vocal, but sadly very misinformed, about cats worth killing people for?</li> </ul> <p>I'd be very happy to talk to councillors after this meeting on programs that it could implement to improve at management and reduce the number of stray cats, esp free desexing</p> <p><b>WRT desexed cats:</b> their energy requirements are 25% lower than undesexed cats</p> |
| <b>Compromise</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I do hope it doesn't, should it decide to impose lockdown or life, it needs to not apply to cats who already live in Frankston. This is what the ACT has done – included a grandfather clause</li> <li>• This is the only compassionate way of avoiding</li> <li>• veterinary experts and even the RSPCA state that it needs advise</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Questions – Cr</b> | •   |
|                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asked for research papers</li> <li>• Hostile</li> <li>• Had some wildlife rescue people and carers who have</li> <li>•</li> </ul>  |
|                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wants to make his decision acc to evidence</li> </ul>  |
|                       | •   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lots of good info opposing curfew</li> </ul>   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opposes curfew</li> <li>• Likely 'due to feral cats' and 'irresponsible cat owners' who already aren't following the rules</li> <li>• Feral cats and those owners aren't being addressed under a curfew</li> <li>• He works for Moreland – free desexing</li> <li>• Lack of consultation to community – could have consulted with registered cat owners by mail. Found out about it at the very last minute</li> <li>• Undue burden on cat owners esp people who rent, have a flat. Can't build a cat run</li> </ul> |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports 24 hour curfew (of course!)</li> <li>• Wildlife carer</li> <li>• RSPCA and Zoos Victoria support and 'the many councils' ie about four out of 76</li> <li>• Cat welfare improved under lockdown blah blah blah</li> <li>• Cats killing wildlife by the millions</li> <li>• Companion cats make up a large enough portion of the killing</li> <li>• Wants to protect diurnal species and send a clear message that Frankston cares</li> </ul>  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>about its environment</li> <li>Houses adjoin reserves</li> <li>Cats roam kilometres from home (SA cat tracking data)</li> <li>Wildlife should be safe from harm as human population grows (or, better, let's stop the human population growing given that we know how harmful it is)</li> <li>Gardens for Wildlife - member</li> <li>Given gardens back to nature in effort to drive biodiversity</li> <li>Local cats visit her property</li> <li>Usual BS</li> </ul>  |
| ██████   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Claim that cats hunt at night and not during the day</li> </ul>  |
| ██████████                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put Michele through the paces</li> </ul>   |
| ██████<br>██████<br>██████<br>██████<br>██████ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acknowledged indig people</li> <li>Animal mmt should be about the animal</li> <li>Large pockets of disadvantage of that cats safe and abide by the bylaws</li> <li>Locked up will develop behavioural issues. Big dumping of cats. Enclosures v expensive</li> <li>How will council support residents if 'curfew comes through'</li> <li>Pet cats – change language. Seems to be interchangeable with feral cats</li> <li>AMOs have told her they're sick of telling people their cats have been run over</li> <li>Bayside and Port Phillip – people take for walks on the beach</li> <li>Doesn't want anti-cat council; didn't move to Morno because of that</li> <li>Cats and dogs are part of the family</li> </ul>                 |
| ██████   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'Feral cats kill wildlife but pet cats don't</li> <li>Is it acceptable that dom cats can kill wildlife when they're 'roaming'?</li> <li>Are you suggesting there are certain areas where there isn't a curfew eg near nature reserve?</li> <li>██████ – people mightn't have the money, esp in pandemic, to confine</li> <li>Suburb of Waterways – can't have a cat. Would hope people there wouldn't be letting their cats out</li> <li>Don't want people leaving Frankston; people love it here</li> </ul>   |
| ██████████                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You're a cat and dog owner</li> <li>Cat hater said 3B wildlife killed every year, incl 5% by pet cats</li> <li>3.4M pet cats in Aust</li> <li>Every dom cat killing 50 animals a year. Do you see your cat killing 50 animals a year</li> <li>She doesn't see her cat killing 50 animals a year</li> <li>Like to know who's provided those stats</li> </ul>  |
| ██████<br>██████                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Didn't answer phone</li> </ul>   |
| ██████<br>██████<br>██████                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addressing three changes</li> <li>Dogs in Frankston – many people ignore the ban. Allowing dogs in will be positive</li> <li>Her dog died of bone cancer. She was in paper – political campaigning about something that will be determined in Sep. Became teary talking about her dog</li> <li><b>24/7 curfew – long overdue order</b></li> <li>Too many owners not following regulation</li> <li>Cats turning up on her property at all times of day and night</li> <li>Had cats in her kitchen, ex various neighbours. It's out of order.</li> <li>Very calm while talking about dog. Very emotional when talking about cats</li> <li>As a resident who cares for all animals, not fun cleaning up dead cats from side of</li> </ul> |

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
|                         | road and returning to owners   |
| ■■■■■<br>■■■■■          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moved to Seaford two years ago</li> <li>Only thing missing in the area is off-lead dog area</li> </ul>  |
| Me                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>   |
| ■■■■■                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No answer</li> </ul>  |
| ■■■■■<br>■■■■■<br>■■■■■ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Supports 24 hour curfew; doesn't think dogs should ever be allowed to run on their own</b></li> <li>Don't have a cat</li> <li>Not anti cat (like 'I'm not racist but') but have experience with cats being out at night</li> <li>Large brush-tail mauled by one [OVERNIGHT! CURFEW ALREADY EXISTS!]. Baby possum in pouch</li> <li>Has hit a cat at night with her car and killed it</li> <li>Dogs on beach – doesn't agree with dog ever being off leash. Had experience with anxious dog that she couldn't take off leash. Took to park one time. Asked owner to call their dog back. Used to get abused – 'if he's aggressive, why have you even got him here' [iel have a dysfunctional dog, so everyone should work around me, rather than me choosing to modify when and where I walk my dog]</li> <li>Not many people can call their dog back</li> <li>Dogs in CBD – don't disagree with it but would feel more comfortable if there were poo bins. (Cos people couldn't supply their own bag?!)</li> </ul> |
| ■■■■■<br>■■■■■<br>■■■■■ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support 24 hour curfew</li> <li>Would like wording to be altered</li> <li>Premises – <b><i>cats shouldn't be allowed to be in their own front or back yards!!!</i></b></li> <li>Inside the house or cat run</li> <li>Yards provides important habitat for wildlife</li> <li>Wildlife is in danger every time they pass from one property to another</li> <li>Aust wildlife did not evolve with cats</li> <li>Tawnies – at risk of cats</li> <li>The 'introduce cat' have no protection from cats</li> <li>Unrealistic to not use a cat run</li> <li>The thing that makes cats deadly to wildlife is their ability to climb</li> <li>Our local wildlife need yards to be safe</li> <li>Wildlife acesmany pressures a thereare;Cats ar onething we can control. We can also■■■■■ control destroying their habitat and climate change■■■■■</li> </ul>  |
| ■■■■■                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Healesville – 59% by dogs</li> <li>Would you suggest we do the same for dogs to protect wildlife?</li> <li>No, as dogs can't climb</li> <li>Regardless of what's done with dogs, need to 'control what we can'. Confining a cat is an easy one to protect wildlife. Fucking easier to stop fucking breeding and destroying wildlife</li> <li>Couldn't leave house on a lead – fair to treat dogs one way and cats another</li> <li>A lot of research about what they hunt</li> <li>Quoted■■■■■- did a podcast recently on cat curfews</li> <li>Cats change what they hunt when confined</li> <li>They can get everywhere</li> </ul>   |
|                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One of biggest responses</li> <li>&gt;200 submissions</li> <li>&gt;1000 survey results</li> </ul>   |

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
|                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public v interested</li> <li>• Sep 20 meeting – will announce results</li> </ul>  |
| ■                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>  |
| ■                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nothing to add</li> <li>• Thanks those who have given feedback</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Consultation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re person who said there was no consultation: Encouraging more people to email councillors directly</li> </ul>  |
| ■                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Want to declare that he has a cat and a dog and lived with them for many years</li> <li>• Not anti-cat, dog or animal</li> <li>• His decision will be according to evidence</li> <li>• He's heard info from people re research and stats and anything else people might have to say</li> <li>• This isn't the end of the discussion at all</li> </ul> |



Media

<https://www.heraldsun.com.au/leader/south-east/dogfight-over-ban-on-canines-at-pat-rollo-reserve-oval-frankston-north/news-story/0138a51c6138a2449a4824d555d2749b>

**8 July 2019**

## **Dogfight over ban on canines at Pat Rollo Reserve oval, Frankston North**

Canines have happily played on a Frankston North oval for years — until reports some were terrorising children and destroying footballs. Now they’ve been banned, and owners aren’t happy.

nruly off-leash dogs have been terrorising kids and bursting footballs at a Frankston North oval, sparking a ban on the animals.

Mothers of children who play at Pat Rollo Reserve say their children are terrified because the “dogs have taken over”.

Mum Chanttell, who didn’t want her surname used, said the ban was essential.

“It used to be an active oval with a lot of kids (but) since the dogs have taken over, they won’t go on — they’re terrified,” she said.

Chanttell said her son’s football had been ruined by a dog biting it, while other parents spoke of “gross” incidents including dogs urinating on sports equipment.

Another mother, Shalina, said: “Balls, dogs and kids — it’s an accident waiting to happen.”

However, furious pet owners from the Frankston North Dog Catch Up Group say they’ve used the oval for years and are tearful and confused by the ban.

Founding member Kathryn Cooper described the 200-strong group as “responsible dog owners”.

“They just want to enjoy part of the open space — they want a safe space they can be with their dog,” she said.

Council officers, dog walkers and representatives of Pines Junior Football Club, which uses the oval, met recently to discuss the matter.

“The objective was to identify how all parties and the broader community could work together to maximise the benefit of this valuable community asset,” mayor Michael O’Reilly said.

Cr O'Reilly said they were working on an agreement enabling dog lovers to walk their pets at Pat Rollo Reserve oval when it was not being used by sporting groups.

He refused to comment on what had led to the ban on dogs.

Pines Junior Football Club vice president Damien Pusch said the club had not made a formal complaint about dogs or called for a ban.

“We were surprised to see those signs (banning dogs) go up,” he said.

[chris.tatman@news.com.au](mailto:chris.tatman@news.com.au)



24 March 2025

## Submission to Nillumbik Shire Council- Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029

The Australian Pet Welfare Foundation (APWF) is a peak research body and advocate for pet welfare in Australia. As a not-for-profit organisation, APWF uses science-based research to enhance community well-being and improve the health and welfare of animals and people. APWF specialises in evidence-based solutions to prevent euthanasia of healthy and treatable companion animals in shelters and pounds and the associated mental health damage to staff and community residents. We share research knowledge with the community, shelters and pounds, state and local governments and veterinarians to create change and save animal and human lives. APWF is led by Chief Scientist Dr. Jacquie Rand, Emeritus Professor of Companion Animal Health at The University of Queensland (UQ) and a registered specialist veterinarian in small animal internal medicine. She has worked extensively in shelter research over the last 17 years, including collaborative studies with the RSPCA, Animal Welfare League and local governments. While at UQ Dr Rand taught Urban Animal Management and since 2013 has co-authored over 30 peer-reviewed articles on urban animal management including management of semi-owned and unowned cats. Dr Rand is an AVA member.

You can read more about us and our vision on our website: <https://petwelfare.org.au>.

### Executive summary

The **Australian Pet Welfare Foundation (APWF)** is dedicated to improving pet welfare through evidence-based programs that reduce overpopulation, increase pet retention, and support effective animal management policies. Key focus areas include training Animal Management Officers in humane and effective handling, promoting responsible pet ownership through education and accessible vet care, and implementing targeted desexing programs to address overpopulation and reduce euthanasia rates. The APWF advocates for improved policies that remove financial and administrative barriers to microchipping and registration, making it more accessible for all pet owners. Additionally, the foundation supports community-based solutions for managing nuisance complaints and proactive strategies to prevent dog attacks. Australian Pet Welfare Foundation promotes behaviour-based assessments and responsible ownership measures as more effective approaches for managing dangerous or restricted breed dogs.

---

Australian Pet Welfare Foundation is a non-profit, tax-exempt Foundation



Additionally, APWF advocates for stronger regulations to prevent the unregulated giveaway of "free to good home" litters, which frequently contribute to overpopulation and higher shelter intake. We also urge councils to implement proactive desexing programs to support the community and reduce the need for these giveaways. Broader policy recommendations include pet-friendly rental laws, increased access to veterinary care for low-income families, and legislative changes to protect community cats. Our foundation emphasizes the need for greater transparency from councils in reporting all statistics, including shelter intake, euthanasia rates, compliance with desexing and registration laws, and the enforcement of cat containment laws, such as number of infringements and notices issued and for non-compliance. Transparent reporting and annual reviews of animal management programs are essential to measuring their effectiveness and ensuring continuous improvement. Australian Pet Welfare Foundation collaborates with local governments, animal welfare organizations, and policymakers to develop and implement effective strategies that prevent unnecessary euthanasia of healthy or treatable pets.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the Nillumbik Shire Council Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029.

### **Domestic Animal Management in Nillumbik Shire**

The Draft Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025–2029 focuses significantly on monitoring, compliance, and awareness initiatives—such as park patrols, signage audits, and online prompts. However, there is a notable gap in proactive community assistance programs aimed at directly supporting pet owners and addressing animal welfare challenges at a grassroots level. The plan places strong emphasis on reactive, compliance-based measures including routine inspections, dog attack investigations, and nuisance complaints. While some of these measures are important for maintaining public safety, they do not adequately address the root causes of issues such as pet overpopulation or owner non-compliance.

The plan also outlines various education initiatives, including responsible pet ownership visits to schools. However, these visits are already being conducted by the team at Animal Welfare Victoria, and therefore council resources could be redirected toward unmet needs within the community. Moreover, there is no clear method of evaluation set out on how the plan's objectives will be achieved—beyond a general commitment to "monitor and review"—leaving the success of these initiatives difficult to measure. There is also no way to submit a formal written response, only allowing for the completion of a survey.

Public education through online prompts and social media campaigns can be effective, but these strategies largely rely on self-motivation and do not offer hands-on support to pet owners who may be struggling. There is limited mention of subsidised veterinary care, low-cost desexing programs, or support for unowned cats through community cat programs. Without these practical supports, the plan remains heavily regulatory and misses the opportunity to proactively assist the community. Strengthening council-supported welfare initiatives—such as desexing grants in



partnership with animal welfare organisations or targeted support for pet owners in financial distress—would offer a more balanced and impactful approach.

### Training of Authorised Officers

Based on the training schedule of your officers that has been provided in the draft plan annual or biannual training for animal management officers is inadequate because key areas such as **dog attack response, barking dog management, and dog bite prevention** are only addressed every two to four years. Given the dynamic nature of animal behaviour, evolving best practices, and the high-stakes nature of incidents involving aggressive or injured animals, more frequent training is essential to ensure officers remain prepared for real-world scenarios. Unlike other public-facing roles where **customer service, conflict management, and occupational health and safety** are reinforced annually, critical skills for **safe animal handling, canine identification, and behavioural assessments** are reviewed too infrequently, potentially leading to outdated practices, increased risk to officers and the public, and inconsistent enforcement. Regular refresher courses, hands-on practical training, and ongoing education in animal behaviour and welfare would better equip officers to handle the complex and evolving challenges of their role.

### Programs to promote and encourage responsible pet ownership and compliance with legislation

The Nillumbik Shire Council outlines a comprehensive regulatory and educational framework for animal management, with a strong emphasis on **compliance-based measures**, including cat curfews, mandatory desexing for cat registration, and enforcement of dog control laws. While these measures align with traditional approaches to managing domestic animals, **they fall short of fully embracing contemporary, proactive, and community-engaged animal welfare strategies.**

Contemporary best-practice models in animal welfare management emphasize **preventative, supportive, and community-driven interventions** that address the underlying causes of animal management challenges, particularly in relation to free-roaming cats and dogs (Rand et al., 2019; Zito et al., 2015). These approaches aim to foster sustainable outcomes for both animals and communities, moving beyond enforcement to prioritize education, access to services, and engagement with vulnerable populations.

### Overemphasis on Compliance Without Adequate Community Support

While Nillumbik has implemented a 24-hour cat curfew and mandatory desexing as registration conditions, **there is limited evidence of practical support for residents to comply**, such as **subsidized desexing programs, support for cat containment, or targeted community education for semi-owners and vulnerable populations.** Research demonstrates that mandates without accompanying support often fail to achieve compliance and may increase the number of unowned, unmanaged cats in the community. **Low-income and marginalized pet owners** are



particularly affected when adequate access to services is absent, risking increased impoundment and euthanasia.

Modern animal management strategies emphasize **community-based programs such as community cat desexing** as effective tools to manage free-roaming cat populations humanely (Spehar & Wolf, 2017). These approaches are notably absent from Nillumbik's strategy, which relies instead on curfews and enforcement that may not address the unowned or semi-owned cat populations that contribute to population growth. Without targeted desexing initiatives, the council's approach may be limited in long-term effectiveness and risk adverse outcomes such as increased cat abandonment.

Although Nillumbik's educational programs — such as **Pet Tales**, school visits, and the Pet Expo — offer valuable outreach, they appear to follow **generalized approaches** that may **not effectively reach or engage residents who are most in need of support**, including those facing barriers to pet care (Zito et al., 2015). Contemporary welfare strategies advocate for **personalized, culturally sensitive, and proactive engagement** to address diverse community needs, particularly among groups more likely to have unmanaged pets or limited access to veterinary care (Rand et al., 2019).

Proactive models emphasize **the importance of supporting owners to keep their pets** through assistance such as low-cost veterinary care, behavioural support, and flexible enforcement that considers individual circumstances (Hughes & MacDonald, 2013). Nillumbik's strategy, as presented, focuses heavily on compliance and regulation without apparent programs aimed at **supporting owners to prevent relinquishment**, potentially undermining the human-animal bond and contributing to unnecessary impoundment.

## **Programs to address over-population rates and high euthanasia rates**

While Nillumbik's strategy includes some public education (e.g., promotion of reduced-cost desexing), **there is limited mention of targeted, community-level engagement aimed at preventing animal overpopulation before it arises**. Proactive animal management emphasises **early intervention through culturally sensitive outreach, personalized support to pet owners (especially in vulnerable communities), and ongoing education beyond general awareness campaigns** (Rand et al., 2019).

For example, **working directly with semi-owners—residents who feed but do not own cats—through targeted desexing and support programs has proven critical to reducing cat populations** (Zito et al., 2015). Additionally, proactive councils often partner with **housing services, social workers, and other community organizations to identify and assist at-risk pet owners**, ensuring animals remain with families and reducing abandonment. These strategies appear underutilized or absent in Nillumbik's current plan.



### Definitions of cats

The APWF recognizes and supports the definitions of cats as delineated in the findings and recommendations from the RSPCA Australia's 2018 report, "Identifying best practice domestic cat management in Australia." These definitions categorize cats as Feral and Domestic (owned, semi-owned, unowned).

#### Domestic cats

Domestic cats live around where people live and frequent. Cat management strategies should recognise three subcategories of domestic cats, as recommended by RSPCA (2018 report) including:

- **Owned cats** – these cats are identified with and cared for by a specific person and are directly dependent on humans. They are usually sociable, although sociability varies. These cats are also called pet cats.
- **Semi-owned cats** – these cats are directly dependent on humans and are intentionally fed by people who do not consider they own them. These cats are of varying sociability and are sometimes called stray cats.
- **Unowned cats** – these cats are indirectly dependent on humans and receive food from people unintentionally, such as via food waste bins. These cats are of varying sociability and are sometimes called stray cats.

#### Feral Cats

- **Feral cats**- Feral cats have no relationship with or dependence on humans (neither direct nor indirect), survive by hunting or scavenging for food, and live and reproduce in the wild (e.g., forests, woodlands, grasslands, deserts). Feral cats do not live in the vicinity of where people live and they do not receive food from humans intentionally (direct feeding) or unintentionally (e.g. via food waste bins). Feral cats are completely unsocialised to humans and have none of their needs fulfilled by humans. Feral cats are not found or trapped in the vicinity of where people live, are not the subject of nuisance complaints and do not enter Australian council pounds or animal shelters.

Failure to recognize and apply these definitions in cat management programs can have severe consequences, leading to ineffective strategies and unnecessary euthanasia. When semi-owned and unowned domestic cats are misclassified as feral, they are often subjected to lethal control measures rather than being included in community-based desexing and rehoming programs. This misclassification undermines the effectiveness of proactive, humane solutions such as targeted desexing, which have been shown to stabilize and reduce free-roaming cat populations over time. Additionally, conflating domestic cats with genuinely feral cats can result in misguided policies that penalize community members who provide informal care to semi-owned cats, discouraging public participation in effective management strategies. Without clear distinctions, councils may rely on reactive, punitive measures rather than investing in sustainable, evidence-based programs that reduce intake at





shelters, improve animal welfare, and ultimately decrease the number of free-roaming cats in the long term.

Recognizing these definitions is essential to ensuring that cat management policies are humane, effective, and aligned with best practices in animal welfare. Research demonstrates that pet cats can respond with more aggressive behaviours to humans when highly stressed than genuinely feral cats. It is critical that before a decision that a cat is euthanised on behaviour, it is given sufficient time to adapt to a stressful environment. Outcome decisions relating to euthanasia based on behavioural characteristics must be deferred to allow the cat sufficient time to habituate to the unfamiliar environment (e.g., shelter or pound), given the likelihood that these cats will experience high levels of fear in a trap cage or unfamiliar environment. By not allowing a stressed cat to settle into the environment, this may result in the cat exhibiting signs of being unsocial and ultimately lead to higher euthanasia.

Although Nillumbik reports a relatively low euthanasia rate compared to other councils, the acknowledgment that **cats with treatable infections, deformities, or temperament issues are euthanized highlights the absence of robust alternative pathways for these animals**. Proactive models emphasize **comprehensive foster care networks, behavioural rehabilitation, veterinary partnerships, and "working cat" programs (placing less socialized cats in barns or businesses)** to reduce euthanasia and offer second chances (Hughes & MacDonald, 2013; Spehar & Wolf, 2019). It is noted that part of the Nillumbik action plan is to provide residents and businesses with the use of cat traps to reduce stray and feral cat populations, therefore more cats will be impounded and euthanised.

The reliance on euthanasia for cats that could be supported through alternative means suggests **a gap in Nillumbik's capacity or willingness to pursue innovative life-saving options**, contrary to contemporary welfare models that prioritize "live outcomes."

### Community Cat Programs

The APWF supports the expansion of innovative desexing initiatives such as that implemented in the City of Banyule (Cotterell 2024). These programs must include clearly defined, measurable objectives over 3–5 years and be targeted to suburbs with high shelter intakes or cat-related complaints. Within these areas, microtargeting specific streets or neighbourhoods where cats are most at risk of impoundment or surrender ensures greater impact. Effective programs also require sufficient intensity—desexing 30 cats per 1,000 residents annually in targeted suburbs or 10 per 1,000 with microtargeting—otherwise objectives are unlikely to be achieved. Budget and Animal Management Officer (AMO) capacity must guide the scale of implementation. Strong local partnerships are essential for success. Collaborating with veterinarians and welfare agencies can expand low-cost or free desexing, particularly for people who cannot access or afford private clinics. Programs should be adapted to local needs and barriers. A limiting factor is veterinary capacity, which constrains broader rollout. High-volume clinics offering early-age desexing should be supported, and animal welfare agencies encouraged—potentially funded—to develop such facilities for public access.





Effective cat management requires coordinated community-wide efforts and cannot rely on a single agency.

Cat impoundments are highest in low-income regional areas (Chua 2023, Albertson 2016), where veterinary services may be inaccessible. These regions need affordable desexing options. Mobile clinics could service towns without a vet, including farming communities. Alternatively, transporting cats up to two hours to a clinic is safe and commonly practised in remote areas of the USA. Desexing and transport services should be supported by partnerships with local veterinary practices.

To reduce unwanted cats, economic barriers to desexing must be addressed, particularly for low-income households or to assist residents with financial stress. This requires affordable programs and grants targeted to vulnerable Victorians. Success depends on microtargeting based on data from cat-related calls and impoundments. Positive, assistive AMO engagement with people who own undesexed cats—especially those experiencing disadvantage—is essential. The Banyule model (Cotterell 2024) demonstrates how such engagement in disadvantaged areas can reduce shelter intake and euthanasia.

Many cat carers struggle, especially during the current cost-of-living crisis, cannot afford desexing—especially when managing multiple cats. These individuals require fully subsidised or very low-cost services. Council grants to enable AMOs to facilitate desexing for such cases would be highly effective. Transport assistance may also be required, and using AMOs to support transport to surgery is a more constructive use of their time than impoundment.

While general desexing promotion is helpful, programs not targeted to those most in need may have limited impact (Frank 2007), often subsidising those who would have desexed their pets anyway. It is essential that programs are place-based, microtargeted to areas of need, and free from access barriers such as requiring pension or concession cards. Vouchers for local clinics may not be effective due to vet shortages and rising service costs. Based on RSPCA NSW experience (Ma 2023), only half of participants in microtargeted programs held benefits cards—highlighting that many who need help fall outside traditional criteria.

Addressing cat overpopulation effectively requires community partnerships and tailored, microtargeted responses. The APWF strongly supports place-based desexing programs that combine suburb-level targeting based on nuisance cat reports and impoundments, with local outreach by program staff. This dual approach—targeting where the problem is greatest and providing direct support to residents—offers the best chance for lasting, measurable impact on cat overpopulation and welfare.

### **Animal Welfare Funds Grant Schemes-**

The APWF strongly recommends Nillumbik Shire applying to the Victorian Animal Welfare Fund Grants Program, which recognises and supports the welfare of companion animals, along with both council, shelters, veterinary clinics providing low-cost desexing, Rescue Groups/ CFCNs and education on responsible pet ownership. These are targeted grants aimed at assisting vulnerable people and should be included as part of the responsible pet ownership promotion by Nillumbik Shire.



The 2023-24 Victorian State budget committed to \$5 million over 4 years, to support pet shelters and animal rescue and rehoming organisations, and since 2020-21 has dedicated \$12 million to animal welfare. This type of approach shows not only a commitment to animal welfare in the State, but a commitment and understanding of the causes of free-roaming cats in urban areas, and therefore effective solutions. The grant scheme is currently providing the funds for 14 Victorian councils to run targeted, free or subsidised cat desexing programs, as they can see the benefits in CCP assisting residents.

## Registration and identification

Although the Council emphasises increasing registration compliance through patrols and investigations, **there is little attention to understanding and addressing the barriers that prevent some community members from registering their animals.** Proactive domestic animal management strategies recognize that **financial constraints, lack of transport, language barriers, and fear of fines** can deter vulnerable populations from complying with registration and microchipping requirements (Rand et al., 2019; Zito et al., 2018).

Modern programs aim to **reduce these barriers through targeted support**, such as:

- **Subsidized or free registration events**, especially in low-income areas.
- **Mobile microchipping and registration clinics** in underserved neighbourhoods.
- **Partnerships with social services, community groups, and veterinary clinics** to reach marginalized pet owners.

By contrast, Nillumbik's reliance on enforcement (e.g., patrols and case investigations) risks **alienating residents who face legitimate challenges in complying**, without addressing the root causes of non-compliance.

The Council's registration data shows a steady decline in total registrations from 13,832 in 2021 to 13,328 in 2024, including a slight but consistent decline in cat registrations. This downward trend suggests a growing gap in compliance and potential under-registration of animals within the community.

Current best practices would prompt analysis of these trends to understand why registration rates are falling and development of targeted strategies to reverse this decline, such as:

- Surveying residents to identify barriers to registration.
- Incentive-based registration drives (e.g., offering free microchipping or desexing with registration).
- Positive reinforcement strategies, such as discounts for early or multi-year registration, rather than relying on punitive approaches.
- No evidence is presented that the Council is actively investigating or responding to this registration decline, which limits the effectiveness of their program.



The draft DAMP mentions educational programs and social media campaigns to promote registration, there is no indication of personalized, community-level engagement strategies to reach non-compliant owners. While registration checks during park patrols and case investigations are noted, **this enforcement-based strategy can risk damaging trust between council officers and the community**, particularly when compliance issues are linked to poverty, housing instability, or other vulnerabilities.

Modern, proactive animal management emphasizes **support before enforcement**, offering assistance and education before resorting to fines or penalties (Rand et al., 2019). There is **no mention of such a graduated approach** in the Council's current strategy—offering an opportunity for improvement. There is no integration of desexing support into the registration process, such as:

- Proactive strategies recommend linking registration, desexing, and microchipping as part of a unified effort to reduce overpopulation and improve welfare (Miller et al., 2014). This also addresses the challenge of unregistered and entire (undesexed) cats contributing to free-roaming populations.

Contemporary animal management strategies increasingly highlight the value of direct community outreach and partnership-based approaches to improve outcomes—particularly when it comes to engaging underrepresented or vulnerable populations. Best practices include culturally appropriate educational materials, door-to-door outreach in high-need areas, and collaborative workshops with veterinarians, shelters, and community leaders to promote registration and responsible pet ownership. In contrast, passive methods—such as generic social media campaigns—tend to be ineffective in reaching those least likely to comply.

While Nillumbik Shire Council's registration and identification strategy meets core legal obligations and incorporates some promotional and educational elements, it remains heavily compliance-driven. The use of follow-up checks for registration renewals may result in negative interactions with residents—particularly those already experiencing financial or social stress—and risk reinforcing disengagement rather than fostering collaboration. Without a greater focus on proactive, supportive, and community-engaged initiatives that help remove barriers to compliance, the current approach may miss opportunities to build trust and improve long-term outcomes in animal welfare and registration uptake.

To enhance its effectiveness and community alignment, **the Council should:**

- Implement **targeted, subsidised registration and microchipping initiatives**, particularly for vulnerable populations.
- Analyse declining registration trends to **identify causes and develop solutions**.
- **Engage directly with the community** through partnerships, outreach, and culturally appropriate education.
- Adopt **graduated compliance approaches**, focusing first on support and assistance.



- Integrate **desexing incentives** into registration processes.
- Explore **innovative identification methods** to improve return-to-owner rates.

By adopting these proactive strategies, Nillumbik could increase registration compliance, improve animal welfare outcomes, and build stronger relationships with the community.

## Nuisance

The **steady increase in nuisance complaints** from 290 in 2021 to 462 in 2024 highlights a growing concern regarding domestic animal management within Nillumbik Shire. This upward trend suggests rising issues related to pet ownership, such as excessive barking, roaming cats, dogs off-leash, or pet-related disturbances in public spaces. However, **without a detailed breakdown categorizing these complaints, it remains unclear which specific issues are driving the increase.** The lack of transparency in complaint data makes it difficult to assess whether the rise is due to a particular problem—such as an increase in dog-related incidents or a surge in stray cat complaints—or if it reflects broader concerns about responsible pet ownership and compliance with local laws.

A more **granular breakdown of nuisance complaints** would provide valuable insights into emerging trends and allow for targeted interventions. If barking dogs constitute the majority of reports, enhanced education on behaviour training and community mediation may be warranted. If roaming cats are a primary concern, improving access to desexing programs and enforcing containment measures could be prioritized. Without this data, the council risks implementing broad, compliance-heavy approaches that may not effectively address the root causes of nuisance complaints. A more **data-driven strategy**, including publishing annual complaint statistics by category, could help refine policy responses and ensure that resources are allocated where they are needed most.

While it is appreciated there are a wide range of duties as an Authorised Officer, what does “Officers will actively monitor, educate, and where appropriate, enforce breaches of our orders and Local Laws.” There is no information on how this will happen, nor what is deemed appropriate for enforcement action. Most importantly, no information on how you will educate, consult and inform your community.

While Nillumbik Shire Council has committed to introducing a new barking dog management process to assist both affected residents and dog owners, it is unclear why the training of Community Safety Officers (CSOs) to support this initiative is not scheduled until Year 3 of the Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP). Given that barking dog complaints are a persistent and often complex issue, requiring a balance of mediation, education, and enforcement, it would seem essential that CSOs receive appropriate training from the outset to ensure the process is implemented effectively. Delaying this training risks undermining the intended benefits of the new process in its critical early stages, potentially leaving both residents and dog owners without adequate support. **If the new barking dog process is expected to be effectively delivered and reviewed in Year 1, why is it not a priority to ensure officers are fully equipped to manage these cases until Year 3?**



Moreover, the plan's broader goals to minimize wandering dogs and dog waste are framed as ongoing actions but lack mention of complementary community education strategies that could reinforce compliance, suggesting an overreliance on reactive enforcement rather than proactive community engagement. Clarification on these timelines and the rationale for delaying essential officer training would strengthen the alignment of the DAMP with best-practice animal management principles, which emphasize early intervention, education, and consistent enforcement as key components of effective companion animal management.

### Cat Containment

The APWF strongly recommends keeping cats contained indoors at night, and during the day, if possible, on their owners' property in a comfortable environment that meets their physical and mental needs. However, the **APWF is against mandated cat containment** (night curfews and 24/7) because it results in increased cat-related complaints, impoundments, and euthanasia, as well as higher costs and enforcement difficulties for local governments. Additionally, mandated cat containment fails to reduce the overall number of wandering cats in the short and long term, both in Australia and internationally, and is a barrier to solving the free-roaming cat problem.

For cat containment to be successful, clear measurable goals need to be first identified such as reduced wandering and nuisance cats and/or reduced risk of wildlife predation. For successful implementation it is critical to recognize the source of the problem, geographic locations where the issues are greatest, and barriers in these areas for residents to successfully contain their cats. For example, free-roaming domestic cats and cat-related complaints are greatest in disadvantaged areas. In these areas, many free-roaming cats are semi-owned cats or unidentified owned cats with disadvantaged owners. Mandated containment will not achieve the hoped for goals, because firstly, most free-roaming cats in these areas are unidentified.

Secondly, many disadvantaged residents simply have no ability to comply, and therefore mandated containment becomes a social justice issue. In areas where free-roaming cats are most numerous and problematic, many residents live in low-cost rental properties that have inadequate fencing for cat containment, and may have no screens on windows and doors or air-conditioning. Containment fencing is often in the range of \$700 to \$2000 or more and is simply not affordable for community members to comply with cat containment mandates. Unfortunately, no subsidy is available to encourage their purchase, and cheaper options, such as PVC pipe installations, may require specific skills that some individuals do not possess. Additionally, many community members live in apartment blocks without access to a yard, leaving them with only communal spaces where they cannot put an enclosure. This is particularly common in social housing, where residents may not have flyscreens on windows and, therefore, cannot physically contain their cats, and fencing is inadequate to fit even inexpensive PVC tubing.

Promoting simple low or minimum cost solutions such as bed-time feeding is likely to get more compliance, especially effective night-time compliance. Night-time containment is effective at protecting vulnerable wildlife, because it is a time when cats



and threatened and endangered species most susceptible to cat predation (nocturnal mammals such as squirrel gliders and phascogales) are most likely to interact.

Bedtime feeding of cats is recommended as a highly effective way to assist cat owners at minimal to no additional cost to keep owned pet cats safely inside at night and prevent potential wildlife predation and nuisance behaviours such as fighting. This involves feeding cats inside at bedtime and ensuring all doors and windows are shut for the night, providing many owners with a way to safely confine their cat in the house/dwelling overnight. Bed-time feeding should be widely promoted to raise awareness among cat owners to increase cat containment at night, however, containment should not be made mandatory. This is because containment may not be achievable, for example for owners with no air-conditioning and inadequate screening on windows and doors, and no suitable secure area. In addition, mandating containment leads to increased costs and enforcement difficulties for local governments and other unintended negative consequences including severe mental health impacts on community residents and staff associated with euthanising healthy cats and kittens. Mandated cat containment also prevents the resolution of the problem of wandering cats by creating a significant obstacle for cat semi-owners to take full ownership of the stray cats they are feeding.

Mandating cat confinement creates a false hope within the community that the problems will be fixed once implemented and enforced. However, enforcement cannot occur when there is no owner for a cat, and effective enforcement requires an owner to be issued with the infringement or notice. In the relatively few cases where an owner or semi-owner is identified, they often have no ability to comply. Infringements issued by the council noncompliance can further financially burden cat owners without achieving containment.

Mandating cat containment is seen as a popular solution to the free-roaming cat and nuisance problem. However, this is because the community does not understand the cause of the problem (low socioeconomic, semi-owned and unidentified owned cats), nor do they understand the adverse impacts of such a program on staff mental health and job satisfaction, nuisance complaints and costs to councils and welfare agencies. They also do not understand that evidence from Victoria demonstrates they are not effective, while microtargeted desexing programs are successful at reducing the problem.

The expansion of local cat confinement laws will not solve the issue of semi-owned and stray domestic cats, as has been shown in previous instances such as Yarra Ranges Council and Casey Council (further details at [APWF 2023](#)). Furthermore, some councils have produced reports stating that curfews are unenforceable (Hobsons Bay Council, Hume City Council). In the City of Yarra Ranges (Victoria), in the 3rd year after mandating 24/7 cat containment, cat-related complaints increased by 143%. Yarra Ranges Council acknowledged that the significant increase in cat complaints was likely the result of the introduction of a 24-hour cat curfew in 2014. In addition, impoundments increased by 68%, and euthanasia increased by 18% (human population only increased by 2%) (Yarra Ranges 2021).

In the City of Casey (Victoria), 20 years after introducing mandated 24/7 cat containment, the number of cats impounded was still 296% higher than baseline (from





264 cats in 1998 to 1,047 cats in 2019/20), more than double the rate of the human population increase. In 2000, Casey received 349 cat nuisance and related complaints which had increased to 376 complaints in 2020/2021 (Casey Council 2001 & 2021a, b)([APWF 2023](#)) Therefore, mandated containment is not effective over 3 years or 20 years in reducing complaints associated with free-roaming cats, cat impoundments and therefore costs to councils. This failure reflects the impracticality for owners of semi-owned or stray cats to contain cats, and the financial and logistical barriers faced by cat residents in disadvantaged urban environments including in social housing. Therefore, it is important to consider alternative solutions that are both effective and feasible for all community members. We recommend a more nuanced approach that includes supporting the construction of affordable and simple cat enclosures and exploring subsidies for those in need and promoting bedtime feeding where feasible.

### **Mandatory Desexing**

Uncontrolled cat breeding contributes significantly to overpopulation, leading to poor welfare for cats and increased community complaints, impoundments, and euthanasia. While Nillumbik reports a high desexing rate (97%) among its 4,000 registered cats, this only represents a small portion of the total cat population in the Shire. Most nuisance reports relate to semi-owned or unowned cats, which are typically not desexed. Without proactive intervention, these populations will continue to grow. Mandating desexing without offering support fails to address the issue, as many carers cannot comply due to financial or logistical barriers, and issuing infringements to these carers (if identified) will not achieve compliance. Research and practice consistently show that community cat overpopulation is best tackled through high-intensity, microtargeted desexing programs, like those formerly implemented in Banyule (Cotterell 2024), which focus on suburbs with high cat-related complaints and impoundments. These programs are more humane, cost-effective, and sustainable than enforcement-based approaches.

To be successful in Nillumbik, cat desexing initiatives must focus on place-based strategies that remove barriers for disadvantaged residents and engage semi-owners to take full ownership through free desexing, microchipping, and registration. Subsidised or free programs must go beyond broad eligibility requirements and be actively targeted to residents who are unlikely to desex without assistance. Funding from Animal Welfare Victoria should be leveraged to support desexing in areas of high need, including the potential use of mobile desexing units or transport assistance. Council officers, particularly AMOs, play a key role in identifying “hot spots” using local knowledge and should be resourced to support outreach efforts. This community-centred approach would be more effective at reducing impoundments and improving animal welfare outcomes across the Shire, while supporting the wellbeing of both animals and residents.

### **Dog attack**

While Nillumbik Shire Council reports a relatively low number of dog attacks compared to other regions, it is concerning that despite 34 dog attacks being reported



in the 2023–2024 period (as of January 2025), no prosecutions have been undertaken in the last several years, with no reporting on infringements issued or outcomes, such as animal management plans, for minor dog attacks in your draft. Although education and promotion of responsible pet ownership are essential components of a proactive animal management strategy, the absence of enforcement actions in response to serious incidents like dog attacks suggests an over-reliance on education alone, without appropriate accountability. Current best-practice animal management emphasizes a balanced approach that combines education, early intervention, and where necessary, enforcement to ensure public safety (Miller et al., 2014). When enforcement is absent in the face of repeated or serious incidents, it may undermine community confidence in council action and the effectiveness of regulations, particularly when public safety is at risk.

Moreover, while the Council outlines various educational initiatives, such as school programs (which are already available through the Responsible Pet Ownership Program at Animal Welfare Victoria) and the annual Pet Expo, these broad activities may not be sufficient to address the specific risks posed by dogs known to rush, attack, or wander at large. A proactive strategy would typically include targeted interventions for owners of dogs involved in attacks or rushes, such as behaviour management programs, enforced containment measures, and ongoing monitoring (Rand et al., 2019). There is little indication of such tailored responses in Nillumbik's approach. Additionally, while regular patrols are mentioned regularly as an ongoing activity, there is no discussion of using data on attack hotspots to direct patrols strategically, missing an opportunity for focused prevention. To align more closely with contemporary proactive approaches, a clearer strategy for balancing education with early interventions, such as property visits and solutions-based conversations with owners should be embedded within the Council's Domestic Animal Management Plan.

### **Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs**

While Nillumbik Shire Council reports a relatively low number of declared dangerous and menacing dogs, the current approach appears largely reactive, relying on formal declarations once incidents have occurred, rather than focusing on early intervention and proactive management to prevent such incidents. Proactive complaints handling—where concerns about aggressive or nuisance dog behaviour are addressed early through education, behavioural interventions, and owner support—can reduce the likelihood of situations escalating to the point where formal declarations are necessary. This type of early action aligns with contemporary animal management strategies that emphasize prevention, owner engagement, and community safety (Rand et al., 2019). Moreover, while legal penalties for non-compliance are necessary, there is little evidence of programs aimed at supporting owners to comply with restrictions once dogs are declared, such as training assistance or containment support. Without proactive engagement and support, relying solely on declarations and penalties may not effectively mitigate future risks to public safety, and may place undue burden on owners without providing tools to manage their dogs' behaviour. Integrating proactive complaints handling, combined with targeted education and early behavioural





assessments, would strengthen the Council's approach to managing high-risk dogs and align with best-practice models in animal management.

## **Domestic animal business**

While Nillumbik Shire Council's approach to auditing and regulating domestic animal businesses aligns with legislative requirements, the strategy appears primarily focused on compliance and enforcement, with limited emphasis on proactive education and support for businesses to meet standards. Contemporary best practices in domestic animal management highlight the importance of partnering with businesses through education, resources, and ongoing dialogue to promote high welfare standards beyond minimum compliance. Additionally, while audits are conducted annually, this is just a minimum requirement with no mention of incorporating proactive support mechanisms, such as workshops or advisory visits, and how this could strengthen the approach and better align with modern animal welfare principles.

## **Other matters**

### **Nillumbik Dog Pound Facility**

Nillumbik Regional Pound provides important services for lost, surrendered, and seized animals, there is a notable absence of focus on identification and proactive complaints handling as key strategies to reduce impoundments. Contemporary best-practice animal management emphasizes early intervention, community education, and proactive support to prevent animals from entering pounds in the first place, including promoting microchipping, registration, and working with owners of problem animals before issues escalate. Given that the data shows a steady number of dog impoundments over recent years—with only 68 dogs reclaimed in 2024—there is clear scope to improve reunification rates through better identification and direct community engagement.

Additionally, proactive handling of complaints—such as addressing concerns about wandering or nuisance dogs before formal seizure, could reduce the number of animals entering the pound. It is also concerning that there is no mention of Banyule Council's contractual use of the facility, despite Nillumbik outsourcing pound services to Banyule, which could impact capacity and resource allocation. Acknowledging this shared arrangement is essential for transparent reporting and strategic planning. Overall, a stronger focus on preventative measures and proactive engagement with owners would align Nillumbik's approach with current progressive animal management strategies and reduce the burden on pound facilities.

### **Emergency Situations and Community Crisis Assistance**

Nillumbik Regional Pound offers valuable services, including emergency accommodation and support for animals impacted by family violence and welfare cases, its capacity of only 36 individual pens limits its ability to respond to large-scale emergencies or significant impoundment events. In the event of a natural disaster, large-scale seizure, this capacity would be quickly overwhelmed, leaving both animals



and the community vulnerable. It is recommended that Council establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a larger shelter or animal welfare organisation that can accommodate higher volumes of animals in emergencies, ensuring a coordinated and scalable response. Such an agreement would bolster support for domestic violence and welfare-related cases. Many **residents are unlikely to contact council until they are in crisis**, so any available assistance must be clearly advertised and communicated to the public to ensure people know **help is available before reaching breaking point**. Furthermore, clearer information on the criteria for accessing emergency and welfare accommodation would improve transparency and help ensure fair and consistent access to these vital services. Formalizing these arrangements would align the pound's operations with best-practice emergency and welfare planning in animal management.

We have provided references, for any further information you may require please contact [info@petwelfare.org.au](mailto:info@petwelfare.org.au)

Best wishes,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name], BVSc (Melb), DVSc (Guelph), MANZCVS  
Diplomate, American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine

[Redacted name]  
Australian Pet Welfare Foundation

## References

---

Australian Pet Welfare Foundation is a non-profit, tax-exempt Foundation



Alberthsen, C.; Rand, J.; Morton, J.; Bennett, P.; Paterson, M.; Vankan, D. Numbers and Characteristics of Cats Admitted to Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) Shelters in Australia and Reasons for Surrender. *Animals* 2016, 6, 23. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani6030023>

Australian Pet Welfare Foundation 2022. Position Statement Key Issues Mandated Cat Containment. Available online: [Cat Containment: Position on Safe Pet Management - APWF](#)

Chua, D., Rand, J., & Morton, J. (2023). Stray and Owner-relinquished cats in Australia—Estimation of numbers entering municipal pounds, shelters and rescue groups and their outcomes. *Animals*, 13(11), 1771.

Cotterell, J. L., Rand, J., Barnes, T. S., & Scotney, R. (2024). Impact of a Local Government Funded Free Cat Sterilization Program for Owned and Semi-Owned Cats. *Animals*, 14(11), 1615.

Hampton, J. O., Hyndman, T. H., Barnes, A., & Collins, T. (2020). Animal welfare and the management of cats in Australia: A discussion of animal ethics. *Animals*, 10(3), 437.

Hughes, K. L., & MacDonald, T. L. (2013). Pet retention: Time for a paradigm shift. *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, 243(5), 611-616.

Frank, J. M., & Carlisle-Frank, P. L. (2007). Analysis of programs to reduce overpopulation of companion animals: Do adoption and low-cost spay/neuter programs merely cause substitution of sources?. *Ecological Economics*, 62(3-4), 740-746.

Rand, J., Tan, M., Morton, J., & Trappler, B. (2019). Strategies to reduce the shelter intake of cats: A systematic review of interventions and outcomes. *Frontiers in Veterinary Science*, 6, 430.

RSPCA Australia (2018) Identifying Best Practice Domestic Cat Management in Australia. Available online: [https://kb.rspca.org.au/bfd\\_download/identifying-best-practice-domestic-cat-management-in-australia-may-2018/](https://kb.rspca.org.au/bfd_download/identifying-best-practice-domestic-cat-management-in-australia-may-2018/)

Spehar, D. D., & Wolf, P. J. (2017). An examination of an iconic Trap-Neuter-Return program: The Newburyport, Massachusetts case study. *Animals*, 7(11), 81.

Ma, G. C., McLeod, L. J., & Zito, S. J. (2023). Characteristics of cat semi-owners. *Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery*, 25(9), 1098612X231194225.


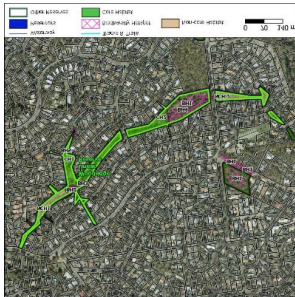
Miller, H., Ward, M., Beatty, J. A., & Norris, J. M. (2014). Population management of owned, stray and feral cats: A survey of current attitudes and practices of veterinarians in Australia. *Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery*, 16(11), 889-899.

Zito, S., Vankan, D., Bennett, P., Paterson, M., & Phillips, C. J. (2015). Cat ownership perception and caretaking explored in an internet survey of people associated with cats. *PloS one*, 10(7), e0133293.

**Feedback on draft DAMP maps and cat curfew options**, provided by Environment teams (Enviroworks & Land Management team and Environment & Sustainability team)  
20 March 2025

In order to support the objectives of Council's *Biodiversity Strategy 2024-2034*, the following recommendations are made:

- Regarding the cat curfew options, it is recommended that a 24 hour cat curfew be introduced.
- Regarding the dog areas:

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | Fergusons Paddock<br>Hurstbridge                                | The current map is fine. No change recommended.  |
| 2 | Nillumbik Park<br>Diamond Creek – map 1<br>(Marngrook Oval map) | The current map is fine. No change recommended.  |
| 3 | Nillumbik Park<br>Diamond Creek – map 2<br>(Coventry Oval map)  | <p>a. Make small section north of Coventry Oval (on north side of Diamond Creek) a dog on-lead area because this is a biodiversity hotspot. Pink area in below map taken from site Conservation Brief.</p>  |
| 4 | Diamond Creek Reserve   | The current map is fine. No change recommended.  |
| 5 | Eltham East Linear Reserve                                      | <p>a. The unnamed reserve at bottom right, where dogs are shown as being prohibited is not a core biodiversity habitat so could be changed to become an off-leash area (from a biodiversity perspective).</p>  |
| 6 | Woodridge Linear Park   | <p>a. Make section at eastern end of Woodridge Linear Park a dog on-lead area because this is a biodiversity hotspot (BH4/BH1). Pink area in below map taken from site Conservation Brief.</p>             |

|    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 7  | Susan Street, Eltham                        | The current map is fine. No change recommended.   |
| 8  | Falkiner Street Park, Eltham                | The current map is fine. No change recommended.   |
| 9  | Plenty River Drive Reserve, Greensborough   | The current map is fine. No change recommended.   |
| 10 | Griffith Park, Eltham                       | The current map is fine. No change recommended.   |
| 11 | Eltham Lower Park (and Hohnes Hill Reserve) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Make the viewing platform at the confluence of the Diamond Creek and the Yarra River an on-leash location.</li> <li>b. Check location of Leinster Farm wetlands (dog prohibited area), they don't extend as far as depicted in red.</li> <li>c. Could make the Leinster Farm area north of the wetlands an off-leash area (it is currently shown as on-lead).</li> <li>d. Consider making Hohnes Hill Reserve a dog-prohibited reserve. The narrow trails in this reserve wind between sensitive native flora and fauna, so the potential for trail-adjacent dog-on-leash impacts is particularly high here.</li> </ul> |
| 12 | Gumtree Reserve, Research                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Make this an on-leash area so it is consistent with other council bushland conservation reserves. It contains sensitive flora and fauna which require protection.</li> </ul>  |
| 13 | Wattle Glen Memorial Park (Wilson Reserve)  | No comment. Not managed for biodiversity.   |

Submission following error in NSC Participate Nillumbik online system:

**Domestic Animal Management Plan, April 2025.**

██████████ ██████████

Background: I am a registered pet owner (of a splendid dog) and love animals. I understand the immeasurable good that animals offer, and how human and non-human animals have coexisted in close relationships for a very long time. At the same time, I acknowledge the significant environmental impacts pets have across Australia – from resource use to the killing of native wildlife. Urgent action is needed to reduce impacts.

Cats are beautiful creatures with many attributes. They are formidable hunters – it is in their DNA. They are not part of the Australian ecosystem and their presence on this continent in the last 200 or so years has brought devastating impacts. It is estimated that domestic cats each kill more than 100 native animals each year.

**I am in support of the following actions, among others:**

- Ensure 24-hour cat confinement/curfew.
- Improve enforcement of dogs off lead, especially in reserves.
- Improve education and enforcement to ensure removal of dog poo by dog owners/carers.
- Improve pet registration processes.
- Improve programs to support responsible pet ownership – including ethical/environmentally responsible actions such as better poo disposal.
- Increase responsiveness of NSC officers/rangers to nuisance/barking dogs.

***Cat Curfew:***

This is a critical issue to bring Nillumbik up to speed with other Councils, the majority of which have 24-hour cat curfews. It is an important action for the basic care of biodiversity.

Cats cause the death of countless small animals – from butterflies, moths and other insects, to reptiles, mammals and birds. Day-time kills are often different to night-time kills which is part of the reason it is important to have a 24 hour curfew.

Cats also cause disruption to the lives of many animals – for example, small birds are reluctant to carry on with their usual activities when they know there is a cat around. It can disrupt their feeding, breeding, and resting. This adds pressure to native animal populations that are already suffering under the impacts of urbanisation.

Roaming cats in Nillumbik can also end up becoming part of the feral cat population. The Federal Government recognises how feral cats contribute to the decline of native fauna. We have a local and national responsibility to ensure all cats are confined.

Changes should be made as soon as possible. These should offer clear and considered communications to the community so there is sound understanding of the issues, leading to welcome change rather than push-back.

***Responsible dog ownership:***

Keeping dogs on leads better protects flora and fauna in Nillumbik. Many people do not understand why, and Council should take a pro-active educational role in clearly explaining the issues.

I convene a Friends Group and although the Reserve we look after is a dogs-on-lead Reserve, I frequently see people going through with dogs racing around off lead. While this might help keep the rabbit population down, or at least well exercised and a bit nervous, it does also lead to damage being done, and fear being felt by native animals who might then leave the area. When I see people going through with their dog off lead I have a calm and kind conversation with them. Not once have I had a bad reaction – in fact, people are often grateful that I have spoken to them and explained the details. Once people understand, they generally want to do the right and caring thing.

The same goes for dog poo – if people understand how problematic dog poo is for the environment/animals/waterways, they will generally take responsibility for it.

Council should increase communications about this issue via various methods (Nillumbik News, noticeboards, signs in parks, along footpaths etc).

Wrapping dog poo in plastic and throwing it in the bin is a major problem for a range of reasons. Council should encourage the use of plastic-free alternatives for the collection of dog poo (such as newspaper and paper bags that are approaching the end of their re-use).

Council should explore and create solutions for composting systems, especially in areas known for dog-gatherings eg dog parks etc.

Here are some quick and interesting articles regarding the impact of dog poo and how it can be disposed of a lot more responsibly (Nillumbik Council should be a leader!):

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/jan/01/stools-to-fuels-street-lamp-runs-on-dog-poo-bio-energy-waste->

<https://phys.org/news/2018-01-street-dog.html>

<https://www.inventioncity.com/new-inventions/light-powered-by-dog-poop>

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/jan/15/dog-poop-bags-plastic-alternatives>

***Animal welfare:***

According to the RSPCA and other animal care groups, cats are much safer when kept indoors rather than when they are allowed to roam. Cats and dogs that roam often suffer from being hit by a car, end up in fights with other animals (causing injury to themselves and/or the other animal), bitten by a snake trying to defend itself, lost or stolen.

These issues raise significant questions regarding animal ethics and must be appropriately addressed by Nillumbik Shire Council.

Thank you for the opportunity to raise my concerns and contribute to the DAMP policy development.

# Friends of Nillumbik Inc.

P.O. Box 258 Eltham 3095

[mail@friendsofnillumbik.org](mailto:mail@friendsofnillumbik.org)



## **Submission to Participate Nillumbik in response to draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029**

April, 2025

Friends of Nillumbik Inc. (FoN) provides this written submission in response to Nillumbik Shire Council's (NSC) invitation to provide feedback on the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) 2025-2029.

### **Summary Response**

FoN supports the draft DAMP 2025-2029, recognising the importance of pets to many residents. We commend:

- The proposed introduction of a 24-hour cat confinement to the owner's property policy.
- Improved pet registration processes.
- Improved proactive programs to increase responsible pet ownership.
- Orders specifying where dogs and cats are not permitted, regulating on and off-leash areas, and requirements for effective control of dogs.
- Improved enforcement of dogs off lead and dog litter.
- Increased responsiveness of NSC officers to nuisance/barking dogs.

In our review comments on the 2021-25 DAMP, we proposed that planning, consultation and operation of the DAMP and associated pet management be fully funded by pet owners. Review of the 2025-26 Council budget for the Animal Management service area appears to indicate revenue and expenditure are about the same, but there is no breakdown of this to show that it is fully funded by pet and domestic animal owners. This should be an explicit policy requirement in the DAMP.

### **Specific Further Comments on draft DAMP**

#### Promotion of Responsible Pet Ownership

In our review comments on the 2021-25 DAMP, we proposed that consideration be given to incentive-based registration costs, for example, for pet owners who do the right thing



and have no instances of complaints, enforcement actions, or impoundments. This could take the form of registration discounts.

Council could also encourage the use of plastic-free alternatives for dog poo bags - newspaper is a great option, or paper bags that are almost at the end of their re-used life. Appropriate home composting is also preferable – ‘pick it up and take it home’. Council could also set up better systems near dog walking areas, such as a poo composting system rather than land fill bins filling with plastic wrapped poo.

#### Cats.

We confirm our support for a ‘24-hour cat confinement to their home property’ policy as proposed in the draft DAMP, along with the phase-in period and support from Council providing advice on cat containment options and methods. We reinforce this proposal with the following:

In the 2021-25 DAMP, it was stated that 66.4% of survey responses had either strong or somewhat support, and 60% of quick poll responses indicated support, for a 24-hour cat curfew. Further, of the 10 most common community issues referenced in the DAMP, four of them (3, 6, 7 and 8) related to cats outside their property, preying on wildlife, creating a nuisance, or appearing unowned. Yet Council at the time did not support the proposal and instead opted for a partial daytime curfew.

Our research has indicated that, of the eight councils around metropolitan Melbourne with Green Wedge Management Plans, most of them (Yarra Ranges, Mornington Peninsula, Whittlesea, Cardinia and Casey) have 24-hour cat curfews, with only Nillumbik and Kingston having night-time restrictions and Melton having no curfew but regulations to report cats trespassing on a property. Manningham City Council introduced a 24-hour cat confinement policy on 1 April 2024.

The Albanese government recently announced (7 September 2023 - [Government declares war on feral cats | Ministers \(dcceew.gov.au\)](#)) a new action plan to ‘stop feral cats from decimating wildlife and driving vulnerable native species to extinction’, and to reduce feral cat numbers across Australia. Cats kill two billion reptiles, birds and mammals every year, have played a role in two-thirds of mammal extinction over the last 200 years, and currently threaten over 200 nationally listed threatened species.

Domestic cats also contribute to the decimation of native animals when outside their homes. A study published by the Guardian ([Keep pet cats indoors, say researchers who found they kill 230m native Australian animals each year | Wildlife | The Guardian](#)) found that *pet* cats *each* kill an average of 110 native animals per year. The report indicated that daytime roaming cats tended to kill more birds and reptiles, while night-roaming cats tended to kill more mammals. Consequently, nighttime-only curfews, when observed, only partially address the problem.

Cats are also safer inside their homes, according to the RSPCA ([Safe and happy cats | RSPCA Australia](#)), where they are not at risk from traffic, snakes, insects and fights with other animals. The Cat Protection Society says, each year in Victoria, over 1600 stray and surrendered cats must be cared for in adoption shelters each year, and the average life expectancy of a roaming cat is only three years.

Thank you

[REDACTED]

Friends of Nillumbik Inc.

[mail@friendsofnillumbik.org](mailto:mail@friendsofnillumbik.org)

From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: Tuesday, 22 April 2025 3:01 PM  
To: Elishia Jansz <[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>  
Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: Eltham North Ovals - Draft DAMP Survey Results

Thanks Elishia.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Elishia Jansz <[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>  
Sent: Sunday, 13 April 2025 11:48 PM  
To: [REDACTED]  
Cc: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Eltham North Ovals - Draft DAMP Survey Results

Hi [REDACTED],

Apologies for the delay in responding to your question.

Following the completion of Phase Two of the community consultation, we are currently reviewing the survey responses and compiling all submissions received to date. Phase Two generated over 500 submissions.

Our aim is to identify key themes and develop a Consultation Findings Report. This report will be published on our Participate Nillumbik webpage after the upcoming Planning and Consultation Committee meeting, scheduled for Tuesday, 13 May 2025.

This timing allows for any additional submissions from those who may wish to attend the meeting to be taken into consideration.

While I understand that some members of your group may have already registered, we encourage you to register your interest in addressing the Committee as a submitter. Submitters are given the opportunity to present for up to three minutes during the meeting.

Please note: to speak at the Committee meeting, you must register by **5pm on Monday, 12 May 2025**.

Registrations can be made via Council's [website](#), by email [Governance@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Governance@nillumbik.vic.gov.au) or by phoning the Governance team 9433 3718 during office hours.

I'll continue to keep you updated as we approach the date of the meeting.

Regards  
Elishia

**Elishia Jansz**  
**Manager Community Safety | Municipal Recovery Manager**  
**Community Safety**

[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)

03 9433 3352 | 0417 058 369

*We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the Country on which Nillumbik is located, we 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.*

*This email, including any attachments, is confidential and intended only for the individual or the entity named. If you received this email in error please advise the sender immediately by return email and delete it and all copies from your system. If you are not the intended recipient of this email, you must not use, print, distribute, copy or disclose its contents to anyone.*

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, 7 April 2025 10:19 AM  
**To:** Elishia Jansz <[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Subject: Eltham North Ovals - Draft DAMP Survey Results

Hi Elishia,

Now that the survey period has concluded, when do you anticipate the survey results to have been extrapolated and circulated in a form suitable for our group to review?

Regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Elishia Jansz <[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>

Sent: Tuesday, 18 March 2025 1:04 PM

To:

[REDACTED]

Subject: RE: Eltham North Ovals - Draft DAMP

Good afternoon all,

I would like to take a moment to thank you for attending the recent meeting held last week on 13 March 2025 to discuss concerns relating to the Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan consultation (DAMP).

Your valuable input and engagement are greatly appreciated, and we are grateful for the time and effort you dedicated to the discussion. We are committed to ensuring that all feedback is heard and will be carefully considered in the next steps of the process.

As requested, I have attached the relevant document extract from Victorian Government Gazette (Section 26 Order, page 15) for your reference. Should you have any further questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to reach out.

We also invite you to register your intention to address the upcoming Planning and Consultation Committee (the Committee) on Tuesday 13 May 2025, commencing at 7pm, as a submitter, you have the opportunity to make a verbal presentation of up to 3 minutes to the meeting of the Committee. Please note submitters must register their intention to address the Committee by 5pm on Monday 12 May 2025.

You can register via Council's [website](#), by email [Governance@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Governance@nillumbik.vic.gov.au) or by phoning the Governance team 9433 3718 during office hours.

The meeting will be held at the Civic Centre in Civic Drive, Greensborough. Members of the public are welcome to attend the Planning and Consultation Committee meeting. Should you be unable to attend the meeting will also be live-streamed and can be watched online [here](#).

Thank you once again for your participation.

Kind regards  
Elishia

**Elishia Jansz**  
**Manager Community Safety | Municipal Recovery Manager**  
**Community Safety**

[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)

03 9433 3352 | 0417 058 369

*We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the Country on which Nillumbik is located, we 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.*

*This email, including any attachments, is confidential and intended only for the individual or the entity named. If you received this email in error please advise the sender immediately by return email and delete it and all copies from your system. If you are not the intended recipient of this email, you must not use, print, distribute, copy or disclose its contents to anyone.*

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 12 March 2025 9:22 AM  
**To:** Elishia Jansz <[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Re: Eltham North Ovals - Draft DAMP

Thanks Elishia. I will let you know who else will be coming asap.

See you then.

Regards

[REDACTED]

**From:** Elishia Jansz <[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>

**Date:** Wednesday, 12 March 2025 at 9:07 am

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** RE: Eltham North Ovals - Draft DAMP

Good morning [REDACTED],

Thank you for reaching out and proposing a day/time to meet and discuss the matter further. I will send through a meeting invite for 5.30pm Thursday 13 March 2025.

Kind regards  
Elishia

**Elishia Jansz**  
**Manager Community Safety | Municipal Recovery Manager**  
**Community Safety**

[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)

03 9433 3352 | 0417 058 369

*We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the Country on which Nillumbik is located, we 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.*

*This email, including any attachments, is confidential and intended only for the individual or the entity named. If you received this email in error please advise the sender immediately by return email and delete it and all copies from your system. If you are not the intended recipient of this email, you must not use, print, distribute, copy or disclose its contents to anyone.*

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Tuesday, 11 March 2025 4:36 PM

**To:** Elishia Jansz <[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>

**Subject:** Re: Eltham North Ovals - Draft DAMP

Hi Elishia

As discussed this morning I have spoken to a few members from the Dogs for Eltham group and the best time seems to be late Thursday afternoon. Is 5.30pm possible? [REDACTED] is not available until then. Otherwise as late as possible please. I expect the meeting to go for about half an hour.

I would also like to reiterate that this group has always been keen work with Council and any other groups to ensure the best outcomes for all the community.

Looking forward to meeting with you.

Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**From:** Elishia Jansz <[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>

**Date:** Friday, 7 March 2025 at 2:30 pm

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Subject:** RE: Eltham North Ovals - Draft DAMP

Hi [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email. I understand your frustration and appreciate your feedback. I wanted to acknowledge your message and refer to the recent correspondence with other group members earlier today.

As mentioned, I am committed to formally recognising this communication as a written submission on behalf of the Dogs of Eltham user group.

I would also appreciate the chance to schedule a meeting with you, gather any additional feedback, and address any questions you may have.

Kind regards  
Elishia

**Elishia Jansz**  
**Manager Community Safety | Municipal Recovery Manager**  
**Community Safety**

[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)

03 9433 3352 | 0417 058 369

*We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the Country on which Nillumbik is located, we 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.*

*This email, including any attachments, is confidential and intended only for the individual or the entity named. If you received this email in error please advise the sender immediately by return email and delete it and all copies*



*from your system. If you are not the intended recipient of this email, you must not use, print, distribute, copy or disclose its contents to anyone.*

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, 7 March 2025 10:14 AM  
**To:** Elishia Jansz <[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Re: Eltham North Ovals - Draft DAMP

Dear Elishia

Further to my email sent to you at 10.39am yesterday morning (not yet responded to) I have now had the chance to complete the survey and noticed that Diamond Hills Oval (Plenty River Drive Reserve) is indeed now listed as an off leash area. I apologise for my mistake, I was looking for the Diamond Hills Reserve and wasn't aware of the correct name.

I am still concerned however that there may be other ovals within the municipality that prohibit dogs off leash including the Eltham North ovals and the oval in Plenty. Not listing all sporting ovals in the consultation process limits the opportunity for the community to comment fully. The second survey is very flawed and seems to be trying to restrict responses so that the politically-preferred outcome can be achieved. I have little confidence that the poorly designed survey will achieve a fully informed response from the community. The design is clunky and very restrictive. It seems to be guiding the community rather than trying to understand the community viewpoint.

I have also read your responses to [REDACTED] with much interest and certainly some confusion. When the new signage and dog poo dispensers were installed at the Eltham North ovals there was certainly a clear understanding that dogs would be allowed off-leash when organised sport activities were not in progress. There was even discussion with staff that "under effective control" meant well behaved dogs with good recall. After two years of the oval being used without any intervention from Council as an off-leash facility we are now advised that "under effective control" means *by means of a chain cord or leash no longer than three metres*. It is extremely disappointing that staff would advise of this restriction at this late stage of the community consultation. You are also now introducing new information that issues relating to proximity to dog parks and playgrounds have been factored into Council's decision making considerations. Why wasn't this made clear in the initial stages of community engagement? I am sure you can understand why community members in the Edendale ward feel duped and deliberately misled.

As you are aware there are many dog owners who consider the Wattletree dog park as being too small, consisting of many obstacles and is unsuited to large active dogs. Certainly I have heard many people say that they don't like using that park because the confined space increases the aggression of dogs and that older people feel unsafe. The community was informed that the originally-planned size of this dog park was reduced to accommodate car parking for the Men's Shed. Furthermore we

were told that the size was the absolute minimum to qualify for Government grant funding. It is extremely disappointing that Council would spend more than \$800,000 of ratepayer/taxpayer funds to reach an absolute minimum standard. Surely Council should be striving for best practice in the interests of its constituents.

We have a similar issue at Lower Park where the planned dog park currently under construction was reduced in size when Council buckled under the pressure to accommodate the non-existent activities of the Horse and Pony Club. These are two examples of where Council has buckled under the pressure of other groups at the expense of dogs and their owners. This also raises the questions as to whether Council plans to exclude (by stealth) off-leash dogs on the Lower Park ovals once the construction of the new dog park is completed.

I for one do not think the consultation has been adequate and look forward to a review that enables the community to express its viewpoints in a more comprehensive way.

Looking forward to your response

[Redacted]

**From:** Elishia Jansz <[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>

**Date:** Thursday, 6 March 2025 at 2:33 pm

**To:** [Redacted]

**Cc:** [Redacted]

**Subject:** RE: Eltham North Ovals - Draft DAMP

Good afternoon [Redacted],

Thank you for your email, I fully understand your frustration around the shared spaces and appreciate your desire for clarity.

The purpose of the phase one consultation was to gather feedback from the community on what matters most in terms of responsible pet ownership. This feedback has been used to formulate the draft DAMP of which we are currently consulting with community.

While both ovals in Eltham, do have signage indicating: *No dogs on oval when in use by authorised user groups*, the Eltham North Adventure Oval does state *Dogs must be on a leash at all times. No dogs on oval when in use by authorised user groups*.

The existing Section 26 order under Domestic Animal Act 1994 , outlines that *dogs must be under effective control of a person by means of a chain cord or leash no longer than three metres, in all public parks and reserves except where designated by signs in areas listed on the order.*

The areas currently listed in the order are as follows:

*Dogs are permitted off-leash but must be under effective control whether restrained or otherwise in the following parks and reserves (as designated by signs):*

- a) Eltham Lower Park, Eltham*
- b) Griffith Park, Eltham*
- c) Plenty River Drive Reserve, Greensborough*
- d) Eltham East Linear Reserve north of Diosma Road, Eltham*
- e) Falkiner Street Park, Eltham (Barrack Bushland)*
- f) Susan Street, Eltham*
- g) Gumtree Reserve, Research*
- h) Woodridge Linear Park, Eltham*
- i) Fergusons Paddock, Hurstbridge. South side of path only. Dogs are prohibited from entering the wetlands areas as signposted*
- j) Nillumbik Park, Diamond Creek. Dogs are prohibited from entering sporting oval and wetlands*
- k) Diamond Creek Reserve, Diamond Creek. Dogs are prohibited from entering wetlands areas where signposted and sporting oval (except at Council approved events)*

We are gathering feedback through phase 2 consultation on the draft DAMP including existing maps of the above areas. This input will help us create the Final DAMP, which may include additional areas to be addressed in an updated Section 26 order with updated mapping.

To ensure the ovals remain designated shared space and consider off-leash areas, we encourage respondents to clearly state that these specific ovals should be off-leash, even though they were not directly included in the survey. While there isn't a specific number of responses required, the more clear and consistent the feedback is on this matter, the better we can address it in the final DAMP and any subsequent Section 26 order updates.

Your feedback is valuable, and we are committed to ensuring it is heard. If you have any further questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Kind regards  
Elishia

**Elishia Jansz**  
**Manager Community Safety | Municipal Recovery Manager**

[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)

*We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the Country on which Nillumbik is located, we 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.*

**From:**

**To:** Elishia Jansz <[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>;

**Cc:**

Hi Elishia,

I would also like to take point with your comment that the Eltham North ovals are not included because of the proximity to existing dog parks - the ovals at Diamond Creek are part of the survey despite having a dog park in close proximity, as are the ovals at Eltham Lower park and Fergusons Paddock, so this feels like an inadequate reason to discount these two ovals. They also have playgrounds near by. I understand that the very close proximity of the playground to the EN Adventure Playground Oval may be an issue - which is yet another reason to keep the oval at Eltham North Reserve Top Oval a designated shared space and off lead oval. While keeping both ovals as shared use would reduce wear and tear on any one oval, we are more than happy as a dog walking community to use just one of these ovals. This would provide two spaces for the sporting clubs to use without dogs, and the dog park for small/quiet/inactive dogs while enabling the rest of the community to exercise and socialise their dogs at the ENR Top Oval (when not in use by sporting groups).

I would also like to reiterate here that dog parks are not safe alternatives to off lead ovals. Dog parks can not be used by families with children, nor by people who wish to exercise with their dog. It is common knowledge now that best practice is to have dog parks only as an additional space, and not as the only space for dogs to be exercised. This was discussed with council last year at one of our consultations and the expert evidence provided. We also discussed the use during the day of the ovals by dog owners. If these ovals are restricted use rather than shared, we are wasting a valuable community resource. When we left that meeting, we were assured in no uncertain terms that the council was not wishing to change the status of ovals that are currently working. Since that time, our group has been in regular contact with council and have been told that there have been no adverse responses or complaints regarding the ENR Top Oval.

Can you please let us know in exact terms, what council requires in order to keep the ovals designated shared space /off lead areas? Do you need respondents to specify that these ovals in particular should remain off lead - despite not being included in the survey? How many such responses are required? I have lost all faith in the feedback process so am seeking some clarity around what we can expect.

Thank you,

[Redacted signature]

-----  
[Redacted signature]

*I respectfully acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations as the traditional custodians of the lands and waters on which I live and work. Always was, always will be.*

---

**From:** Elishia Jansz <[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, 5 March 2025 5:14 PM

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** RE: Eltham North Ovals - Draft DAMP

Good afternoon [REDACTED],

Thank you for reaching out and seeking clarity on the ovals captured within the DAMP.

The current list of off leash map areas in Nillumbik captures those within the existing section 26 Council Order, that currently permits dogs off leash while under effective control whether restrained or otherwise in those specific parks and reserves listed.

Currently dogs are permitted on leash on the Eltham North Oval. Based on feedback from Phase 1 consultation, we received only six responses, specifically referencing Eltham North oval as an area that dogs should be permitted off leash, outside of sporting use.

The intent of Phase 2 of consultation is to seek further feedback on the entirety of the DAMP including the maps, to allow us to better understand the needs of the community. It is important to note that not all Nillumbik ovals or reserves are captured within the DAMP or permit dogs on them, factoring in;

- Distance of existing dog park within close proximity
- Proximity of children playground/school
- Environmentally sensitive areas

However, we are still open to feedback on whether other spaces should be considered.

This feedback is encouraged and can be captured in any additional feedback on the draft DAMP. [Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 -2029 survey | Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 | Participate Nillumbik](#)

Kind regards

Elishia

**Elishia Jansz**  
**Manager Community Safety | Municipal Recovery Manager**  
**Community Safety**  
[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)  
03 9433 3352 | 0417 058 369

*We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the Country on which Nillumbik is located, we 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.*

*This email, including any attachments, is confidential and intended only for the individual or the entity named. If you received this email in error please advise the sender immediately by return email and delete it and all copies from your system. If you are not the intended recipient of this email, you must not use, print, distribute, copy or disclose its contents to anyone.*

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 4 March 2025 5:04 PM  
**To:** Elishia Jansz <[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Eltham North Ovals - Draft DAMP

Hi Elishia,

I hope you're well. We have reviewed the draft DAMP and note that the off lead areas listed (refer extract from the report below) does not include the current off leash ovals in Eltham North? Please advise whether they are proposed to remain off leash. This ought to be specifically clarified in the DAMP document. I look forward to your further response.

**DRAFT - Nillumbik Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029**

**Appendix 1: Maps of off-leash areas in Nillumbik**

- Fergusons Paddock - Hurstbridge
- Nillumbik Park - Diamond Creek
- Diamond Creek Reserve - Diamond Creek
- Eltham East Linear Reserve - Eltham East
- Woodridge Linear Reserve - Eltham
- Susan Street Reserve - Eltham
- Falkiner Street Park - Eltham (Barak Bushland)
- Plenty River Drive Reserve - Greensborough
- Griffith Park - Eltham
- Eltham Lower Park - Eltham
- Gumtree Reserve – Research
- Wattle Glen War Memorial Park (Wilson Reserve) – Wattle Glen

\*Updated maps of off-leash areas and designated dog parks currently in design and will be included in final DAMP 2025-2029.

Regards,

[Redacted Signature]



[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 13 February 2025 3:37 PM  
**To:** 'Elishia Jansz' <[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** [Redacted]

**Subject:** RE: Eltham North Ovals - DAMP

Thanks Elishia, appreciate the update. Looking forward to the next phase.

Regards,

[Redacted]

|            |            |
|------------|------------|
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] |

[Redacted]

**From:** Elishia Jansz <[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Thursday, 13 February 2025 3:26 PM

**To:** [Redacted]

**Cc:** [Redacted]

**Subject:** RE: Eltham North Ovals - DAMP

Hi [REDACTED],

Thanks for reaching out, time has certainly flown by!

Following the initial community consultation and engagement last year in June 2024, community members were invited to share their thoughts and priorities regarding dogs and cats in their local area.

The feedback received enabled us to better understand what matters most to residents about domestic animals and their management. The insights gathered will help shape and support the new draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029.

This plan will address key issues such as responsible pet ownership, animal welfare, public safety, and the environmental impact of domestic animals.

Take a look at our website to view the insights gathered from Phase 1 in the Domestic Animal Management Plan Consultation funding report. [Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 | Participate Nillumbik](#).

We are planning to commence Phase 2 of consultation and engagement on the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 in early March 2025, it is anticipated this will run for 5 weeks.

I encourage you to register to Participate Nillumbik to stay informed of categories and topics that interest you that Council may seek feedback on, register here [Create an account | Participate Nillumbik](#), alternatively we welcome you to provide feedback in person at one of our scheduled pop ups:

- Eltham North Dog Park - 12 March 2025 4.30pm – 5.30pm
- Diamond Creek Trail, Diamond Creek– 22 March 2025 11am – 1pm

Kind regards

Elishia

**Elishia Jansz**  
Manager Community Safety | Municipal Recovery Manager  
Community Safety  
[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)

03 9433 3352 | 0417 058 369

*We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the Country on which Nillumbik is located, we 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.*

*This email, including any attachments, is confidential and intended only for the individual or the entity named. If you received this email in error please advise the sender immediately by return email and delete it and all copies from your system. If you are not the intended recipient of this email, you must not use, print, distribute, copy or disclose its contents to anyone.*

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 11 February 2025 4:36 PM  
**To:** Elishia Jansz <[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** RE: Eltham North Ovals - DAMP

Hi Elishia,

I hope you have been well. Please provide an update in relation to the formulation of the revised DAMP.

Regards,

[Redacted]

|            |            |
|------------|------------|
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] |

[Redacted]

**From:** Ben Tzirkas  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 5 June 2024 10:29 AM  
**To:** Elishia Jansz <[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** [Redacted]

[REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Eltham North Ovals - DAMP

Thanks Elishia.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

|            |            |
|------------|------------|
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] |

[REDACTED]

**From:** Elishia Jansz <[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 4, 2024 2:37 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]



**Subject:** RE: Eltham North Ovals - DAMP

Hi 

Great to hear that you received the notification regarding the review of our Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 (DAMP).

The purpose of the first phase of community consultation, involves interaction with the community to better understand the needs and perspectives of the community 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.

This process will allow Council to utilise the insights gained from this research to understand community sentiment regarding animal management, including dog on ovals and validate data to ensure the relevance of content in the Draft DAMP, through external engagement with Community and key stakeholders we will likely identify current issues that are not yet dealt with by the current 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 DAMP effectively, this will occur in the second half of this year.

A revised Draft DAMP and additional engagement initiatives are proposed to be carried out and will require further extensive community consultation and engagement with key stakeholders early next year. In 2025, it is at this stage updated mapping of proposed area prescribed as on leash/off leash will be included.





[Redacted]

Subject: Eltham North Ovals - DAMP

Hi Elishia,

I hope you have been well. We received the new draft DAMP today. I note that the Eltham North sporting precinct is not mentioned in the DAMP. What does that mean for the Eltham North ovals in terms of the current off lead dog access? Your clarification would be appreciated.

Perhaps a quick face to face meeting to discuss what is proposed in the new DAMP could be accommodated by council? We are very keen to understand the impact of the proposed document and to ensure council is aware and takes into account our concerns.

I look forward to your further reply.

Regards,

[Redacted]

|            |            |
|------------|------------|
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] |

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, September 4, 2023 10:22 AM  
**To:** Elishia Jansz <[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Eltham North Ovals - DAMP

Hi Elishia,

Just wanted to say a big thankyou for meeting with us last week. It was lovely to meet both you and Renee. The meeting was very helpful and your time very much appreciated. I/we look forward to hearing from you later next year at the appropriate time so that we can engage in relation to the upcoming DAMP renewal.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**From:** Elishia Jansz <[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 15, 2023 9:01 PM

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** RE: Eltham North Ovals - DAMP

Good evening [REDACTED]

Thank you for reaching out with regard to the DAMP review process.

As outlined below, we have every intention to begin the process to review the DAMP in early 2024, however I am happy to accommodate an opportunity to informally discuss the process.

You have mentioned a Friday may be suitable for most to attend, please advise which of the below dates works best for you and the broader group and a time that you prefer.

- Friday 25 August 2023
- Friday 1 September 2023

Following confirmation, I will forward an invite to you all to facilitate a discussion at Council office.

Kind regards

Elishia

**Elishia Jansz**  
**Acting Manager Community Safety and Amenity**  
**Community Safety and Amenity**  
[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)  
03 9433 3352 | 0417 058 369

*We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the Country on which Nillumbik is located, we 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.*

*This email, including any attachments, is confidential and intended only for the individual or the entity named. If you received this email in error please advise the sender immediately by return email and delete it and all copies from your system. If you are not the intended recipient of this email, you must not use, print, distribute, copy or disclose its contents to anyone.*

**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** Monday, 14 August 2023 10:31 AM  
**To:** Elishia Jansz <[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** [redacted]  
[redacted]  
[redacted]  
**Subject:** Eltham North Ovals - DAMP

Hi Elishia,

Please advise status.

Regards,

[redacted]

|            |            |
|------------|------------|
| [redacted] | [redacted] |
| [redacted] | [redacted] |
| [redacted] | [redacted] |
| [redacted] | [redacted] |

[redacted]

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 9, 2023 10:42 AM  
**To:** Blaga Naumoski <[Blaga.Naumoski@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Blaga.Naumoski@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>; Elishia Jansz <[Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Elishia.Jansz@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Eltham North Ovals - DAMP

Thanks Blaga,

Hi Elishia,

We were hoping that we might be able to have a quick informal discussion with you about the DAMP reviewal process. There are roughly six of us from the broader group that were hopeful that you might be in a position to facilitate an informal meeting at your offices. Our preference would be for an out of hours meeting if possible. If that is not able to be accommodated, a Friday during business hours would allow most of us to attend. I look forward to your further advice.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**From:** Blaga Naumoski <[Blaga.Naumoski@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Blaga.Naumoski@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Sunday, August 6, 2023 10:26 AM

**To:** [REDACTED] Vince Lombardi

<[Vince.Lombardi@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Vince.Lombardi@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>

**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** RE: Eltham North Ovals - DAMP

Hi [REDACTED],

Council is required to review the DAMP, including new initiatives by 2025. We are scheduled to start the review in early 2024.

In order for officers to formally commence the review, Council is required to formally resolve to do so and also endorse the commencement of community consultation. Feedback on the 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.

I encourage you to register your details on the [Home | Participate Nillumbik](#) page and indicate that you would like to be notified of future engagement opportunities.

Officers will also have an endorsed communications plan that will support the promotion of the review.

If you have any questions about the process, please reach out to Elishia Jansz, Acting Manager Community Safety and Amenity and she will be able to assist you with your enquiries.

Elishia has been copied into this email.

Kind Regards

Blaga

**Blaga Naumoski**  
**Director of Governance, Communications and Community Safety**

**My pronouns are:** she/her  
[Blaga.Naumoski@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Blaga.Naumoski@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)  
03 9433 3110 | 0432 403 944



*We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the Country on which Nillumbik is located, we 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.*

*This email, including any attachments, is confidential and intended only for the individual or the entity named. If you received this email in error please advise the sender immediately by return email and delete it and all copies from your system. If you are not the intended recipient of this email, you must not use, print, distribute, copy or disclose its contents to anyone.*

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, 4 August 2023 11:43 AM  
**To:** Vince Lombardi <[Vince.Lombardi@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Vince.Lombardi@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>; Blaga Naumoski <[Blaga.Naumoski@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Blaga.Naumoski@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Eltham North Ovals - DAMP

Hi Vince and Blaga,

Further to the below correspondence, I was just hoping for an update on how we might be involved in contributing to the upcoming review of the DAMP document. Your further advice would be appreciated.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**From:** Vince Lombardi <[Vince.Lombardi@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Vince.Lombardi@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 20, 2023 4:51 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Blaga Naumoski <[Blaga.Naumoski@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Blaga.Naumoski@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: Eltham North Ovals - DAMP

Hi [REDACTED],

I Have copied in Blaga Naumoski who is the Director of Governance, Communications and Community Safety.

Blaga's area will oversee the upcoming DAMP review and can provide guidance regarding the process and timing of submissions.

Kind Regards

Vince

**Vincenzo Lombardi**  
**Chief Operating Officer**  
**Operations**  
**My pronouns are:** he/him  
[Vince.Lombardi@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Vince.Lombardi@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)  
03 9433 3280 | 0408 702 932

*We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the Country on which Nillumbik is located, we 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.*

*This email, including any attachments, is confidential and intended only for the individual or the entity named. If you received this email in error please advise the sender immediately by return email and delete it and all copies from your system. If you are not the intended recipient of this email, you must not use, print, distribute, copy or disclose its contents to anyone.*

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 20 July 2023 10:09 AM  
**To:** Vince Lombardi <[Vince.Lombardi@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Vince.Lombardi@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Eltham North Ovals - DAMP

No issue, all good Vince,

We are very grateful for the use of the ovals. Even as late as yesterday I ran into somebody on the oval that said they had only just realised the ovals were open for use again by dog owners again and they were so happy with council's decision.

Last time we met we were discussing the Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) and that it would be updated and become renewed in 2025. Per our discussion at the meeting, we are keen to provide written submission to council at the appropriate time to help shape what the revised document might look like with a view to ensuring that the Eltham North ovals remain open to off lead dogs that are under affective control, except when organised

sporting activities are in progress. How might we commence this process, when is the appropriate time, and to whom should we address any such correspondence? Your guidance would be really appreciated.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

|            |            |
|------------|------------|
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] |

[REDACTED]

**From:** Vince Lombardi <[Vince.Lombardi@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Vince.Lombardi@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 19, 2023 5:28 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Eltham North Ovals - Signage

Hi [REDACTED],

Great to hear from you, hope all is well.

I'm glad the bin dispensers are functional, as [REDACTED] mentioned the signs will be installed by late next week (apologies for the delay).

Happy to discuss further.

Kind Regards

Vince

**Vincenzo Lombardi**  
Chief Operating Officer  
Operations  
My pronouns are: he/him  
[Vince.Lombardi@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Vince.Lombardi@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)  
03 9433 3280 | 0408 702 932

*We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the Country on which Nillumbik is located, we 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.*

*This email, including any attachments, is confidential and intended only for the individual or the entity named. If you received this email in error please advise the sender immediately by return email and delete it and all copies from your system. If you are not the intended recipient of this email, you must not use, print, distribute, copy or disclose its contents to anyone.*

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 19 July 2023 3:58 PM  
**To:** Vince Lombardi <[Vince.Lombardi@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Vince.Lombardi@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Subject:** Eltham North Ovals - Signage

Hi Vince,

I hope you have been well. The bins and bag dispensers at the Eltham North ovals have been really well received by the local community and all of us dog owners are very much appreciative. I just wanted to follow up on the permanent signs for the ovals. Are you able to confirm when they will likely be installed? Also, in case you were not aware, the temporary signs remain on the upper oval but the adventure playground oval had it's signs removed several weeks ago? I look forward to your further advice.



Regards,

[Redacted]

|            |            |
|------------|------------|
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] |

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 3, 2023 8:24 AM  
**To:** Vince Lombardi <[Vince.Lombardi@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Vince.Lombardi@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>; [Redacted]

[Redacted]

**Cc:** [Redacted]

[Redacted]

**Subject:** Re: Eltham North Ovals


Hi All,

Following on from yesterday's email, and having now seen the signs in person, they don't look as concerning as we first thought! (The angle of the photo we saw made them feel quite different). Ideally, we would still love for a more inclusive community focused tone, but we also understand that as they are, the signs do the job of letting people know when and how dogs are allowed on the ovals which is of course the main thing. We are, of course, still willing and keen to be part of the process going forward to engender a genuine culture of community collaboration and would relish the opportunity to work with you to achieve this.

Once again, thank you for your support.

All the best,

 (on behalf of the Dogs of Eltham North Community Group)

-----  
  
  
  
  


*I respectfully acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations as the traditional custodians of the lands and waters on which I live and work. Always was, always will be.*



---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 2 May 2023 12:58 PM  
**To:** Vince Lombardi <[Vince.Lombardi@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Vince.Lombardi@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)> [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Subject:** Eltham North Ovals

Dear Vince, [REDACTED]

It is with great joy and thanks that we have seen the signs come up at the Eltham North ovals. Those of us who have been using the ovals have been monitoring the dog poo, and so far, there have been no issues that we are aware of. We greatly appreciate how quickly changes have been administered.

However, we are a little concerned with the tone of the signs. As a group, we have been very keen to promote a sense of inclusion, compromise and community responsibility. The signs as they are now, come across as fairly combative, and do not represent the shared nature of the ovals that we are trying to engender. The way in which council presents itself in the signs will affect the way in which the community perceives the rules, and thus, the dog walking community. We do not want to be in conflict with the sporting groups (or council), we want to work with them in order to attain the best possible outcomes for all involved. However, the signs do not reflect this, or council's support for such an outcome. There are a number of examples of positive shared use signage across both Nillumbik and other council shires, as well as examples of positive reminders to pick up dog poo. We are aware that the signs on the ovals are temporary, and are keen to be part of the longer term solution. Is there a capacity for us to be involved in the wording and design of the permanent signs so that a genuine culture of community can be supported and engendered within these spaces?

I would also like to reiterate here my earlier suggestion of communicating to the sports clubs a proposal to increase registration for dog owners so that the extra funds raised can be distributed among the affected sports clubs in order to both show our willingness to address the issue in a hands on manner, and to acknowledge and thank them for their role in making the space useable for all members of the community.

Sincerely,

██████████ (on behalf of the Dogs of Eltham North Community Group)

[illegible]

*I respectfully acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations as the traditional custodians of the lands and waters on which I live and work. Always was, always will be.*

Cc:

[REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Filed: Follow up

Dear [REDACTED],

It was great to be able to discuss and hear your concerns and issues, thanks again for making the time at such short notice.

We will continue to work with all community groups as best we can to explore workable solutions.

I believe [REDACTED] will be providing an update with regard to signage, social posts and bag dispenser installations.

Kind Regards

Vince

**Vincenzo Lombardi**  
**Chief Operating Officer**  
**Operations**  
**My pronouns are:** he/him  
[Vince.Lombardi@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Vince.Lombardi@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)  
03 9433 3280 | 0408 702 932

*We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the Country on which Nillumbik is located, we 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.*

*This email, including any attachments, is confidential and intended only for the individual or the entity named. If you received this email in error please advise the sender immediately by return email and delete it and all copies from your system. If you are not the intended recipient of this email, you must not use, print, distribute, copy or disclose its contents to anyone.*

**From:** [REDACTED] >  
**Sent:** Thursday, 20 April 2023 10:30 AM  
**To:** Vince Lombardi <[Vince.Lombardi@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Vince.Lombardi@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>  
[REDACTED]

**Subject:** Filed: Follow up

Dear Vince,

On behalf of the dogs of Eltham community group can I again reiterate our utmost appreciation for the solution-finding consultative process you graciously offered last night.

It was a really affirming experience, and demonstrates how well we can work together with a supportive mindset.

I'm attaching the pdf presentation from last night.

I also thought it might be helpful to show our willingness to work with the sporting clubs, if we asked for the set training/match times so we could pass this information on to dog owners. This would help regulate boot/foot/paw traffic at the ovals.

█████ offered a really good messaging for signs which also demonstrates our responsible dog ownership philosophy:

‘Nillimbik is committed to providing shared use community ovals. Dogs may be exercised on ovals but must be in **effective control** at all times. Dogs are not permitted on the oval when in use by authorised sporting and school groups.’

We also had a great chat with [REDACTED] afterwards about some incentives to get the whole community involved in poo management. Perhaps a competition for school kids to create sticker designs we could then put on rubbish bins reminding people about picking up poo, or design input into signage that takes the regulatory edge off and adds a bit of fun.

Again, we thank you so much for your genuine concern and commitment to working with us.

Good luck with the sporting groups Vince and keep us posted!

Kindest,

