

DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

DISCUSSION PAPER

Council is preparing a new Domestic Animal Management Plan and wants to make sure future services consider community needs and aspirations.

ABOUT PETS AND ANIMAL MANAGEMENT IN THE CITY OF MELTON

- There are an estimated 6,000 cats and 17,000 dogs residing in City of Melton homes.
- During COVID, animal complaints and dog attacks increased by 15% and 30% respectively.
- Pet registrations in the City of Melton have increased by 23% (18,349) to 22,600 over the last 4 years, compared to 28% increase in the population.
- Achievements from the last DAMP include the creation of a new Animal Management Unit, a 27% reduction in animal euthanasia rates from 374 to 275 and the commencement of planning for a new modern pound.

SOME INTERESTING BENEFITS OF PETS

- Companion animals saved our health care system \$3.86 billion in 2000.
- Pet owners are more likely to have a greater perception of 'suburb friendliness'; and are more likely to exchange favours with neighbours[1] than non-pet owners.
- The family dog is one of the top five motivators for exercise[2].
- An Austrian study conducted in 2003 found that having a cat in the house is the emotional equivalent of having a romantic partner.

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- Given the benefits of pets should we be making better provision for pets in apartments, or in the community?
- Should we be valuing the benefits of all pets more?

PETS AND OLDER PEOPLE

- Pets encourage mobility and independent living, improve; Increase perception of well-being; Increase attentiveness to own self-care needs.
- Older people in institutions are more sociable and less prone to behavioural volatility when exposed to pets[3].

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- Should we expect more retirement villages to encourage pets in consideration of the health and wellbeing benefits they bring?
- Can we do more as a community to support older people look after their pets?

[[1] Measuring the Benefits Companion Animals and the Health of Older Persons p14

[2] AusPlay; Participation data for the sport sector; Summary of key national findings; Oct 2015 to September 2016 data ; Aust Sports Commission, p8

[3] Measuring the Benefits Companion Animals and the Health of Older Persons p12

DAMP DISCUSSION PAPER

PET RELATED TOURISM

- There has been exponential growth in the number of websites advertising dog friendly destinations, accommodation and eateries.
- Dog owners are likely to be more interested in dog-friendly pubs in UK than romantic restaurants?
- Australians spend more than \$666 million a year on pet minding/boarding services, up \$146 million since 2016?[4]

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- Is pet related tourism something Melton City Council should consider encouraging? If yes, what should be required of establishments that invite pets?
- Should dogs be permitted in footpath dining areas?

PETS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Animal cruelty investigations frequently unravel chronic domestic abuse.
- Children in or from violent households and who have been abused, are the perpetrators of one-fifth of domestic animal cruelty cases.[5]

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- What can the wider City of Melton community do to help relevant organisations make these animals safe and to help the children heal from their abuse?
- What should council's role be?

PETS AND OUR ENVIRONMENT

- Council is currently working toward a model design for dog off-leash areas.
- 66% of dog owners are likely never or only occasionally pick up their dog's litter.
- Owners not picking up their dogs' poo is likely to cause more resentment in the community than any other dog related matter? This is followed by owners not controlling their dogs appropriately.
- Dogs have to be on a lead in Melton with the exception of six off-lead sites.
- There are no restrictions in Melton as to where dogs can go or be as long as they are on a lead.

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- How do we encourage more dog owners to pick up their dog's droppings?
- How do we encourage dog owners to better control their dogs and respect on-leash requirements?

HOW YOU CAN BE INVOLVED

- Attend an online forum at 7pm on Wednesday 31 March.
Register at research.net/r/DAMPOnlineForumRegistration. We'll send you a link to the forum after you register.
- Complete a survey at research.net/r/MeltonDAMPSurvey by Friday 2 April.
- Write an online submission at research.net/r/MeltonDampSubmission by Friday 2 April
- Write a hard copy submission and mail it to:
Animal Management DAM Plan
Melton City Council
PO Box 21, Melton VIC 3337
- Write and email submission and send it to animals@melton.vic.gov.au

[4] Animal Medicines Australia, Pet Ownership Report, 2019

[5] Animal Legal Defense Fund