

Attachment 1 – DAMP 2017-21 CONSULTATION SUMMARY

I. Community consultation results for the first round conducted from 17 July to 7 August 2017

The feedback provided during the two consultation rounds, from key stakeholders such as pet owners, animal welfare agencies, veterinarians, dog obedience groups, sporting groups and the wider community was used to develop the final draft DAMP 2017-2021 presented to Council in this report. Initiatives included in the final draft DAMP are expected to maintain and improve services and facilities provided to pet owners and to benefit all members of the community.

A summary of the results of the first community engagement process that resulted in 1,818 responses included the following:

- I.1 The majority (1332) of respondents owned a dog (74.3%). Only 460 respondents owned a cat (29.4%) and 127 did not own a cat or a dog (7.1%).
- I.2 1,650 of respondents report having registered their pet and expressed a high level of satisfaction with Council's registration process. Council's on line registration was most popular 54%, followed by 33% paying in person and 13% by mail.
- I.3 The population of pets living in apartments totalled 626 (34.9%) with feedback highlighting the need to provide this group more education relating to responsible pet ownership, animal welfare, health and social benefits associated with walking pets.
- I.4 The most popular places to exercise pets in the last twelve months based on visitations included Gasworks Park (46.2%), Peanut Farm Reserve (26.7%) and Alma Park East (24.7%).
- I.5 A high level of satisfaction with dog off leash provisions along the foreshore and park:

The majority of respondents 85% (average), both dog owners and non-dog owners, rated the dog off leash areas along the foreshore and in parks as providing a good balance for all users.

A small number of respondents wanted to reduced time/date restrictions for dogs on beaches (6.1%, 110), more off leash beaches (2.4%, 44) and more off leash areas in parks (3.2%, 58). There were only a few comments about specific beaches: Port Melbourne (11), St Kilda (8), Elwood Beach (4), South Melbourne (3), West Beach St Kilda (3), Middle Park (2), Albert Park (1), Lagoon Pier-Kerferd Road Pier (1). In the context of 1,818 survey respondents, this represents a very small proportion of respondents.

Of all relevant comments (108), the majority of these relate to issues with mixed use parks and reserves in general (eg. off leash / sports fields / playgrounds etc), and the need to fence dog off leash areas. There were only a few comments about increasing off leash parks in the following areas: Elwood (3), Albert Park (3), St Kilda (2), Gasworks (2), Middle Park (1), South Melbourne (1), Ripponlea (1). In the context of 1818 survey respondents, this represents a very small proportion of respondents.
- I.6 The top issues observed by respondents in the past year included one or more of the following:
 - dog poo not being picked up (71.3%);
 - dog off leash when they should be on leash (37.4%);

- dogs in off leash areas who won't obey their owners commands (30.6%);
 - dogs annoying or intimidating other dogs (28.2%);
 - unclear signage about dog restrictions in parks (12.5%);
 - dogs annoying other people in parks or the beach (10.6%);
 - dogs getting in the way of joggers or cyclists along the paths near the beach (8.9%);
 - dogs in outdoor dining areas of cafes causing a nuisance (8.6%);
 - dogs off leash running through parks interfering with sports training (4.1%); and
 - dogs off leash in parks during sporting events interfering with the game on weekends (3.4%).
- 1.7 The vast majority of respondents did not notify Council about their concerns regarding dog's behaviour (88.6%). Of those that did report issues to Council, the satisfaction rate with Council's response to resolve the issue was high (4.4% out of 5%).
- 1.8 The top concerns respondents had about cats on their property include cat owners failing to confine their cats to their property (7.1%), wanting a cat curfew at night (3.1%), minimising impact on wildlife (1.2%) and eliminating uncontrolled/wandering/feral and stray cats (1%).

2. Community Consultation on the Draft DAMP 2017-2021 from 25 September to 9 October 2017

A questionnaire was made available via Council's online survey tool - Have Your Say from 25 September to 9 October 2017.

The Community was encouraged to view the draft Plan and provide feedback, including suggestions for anything else that they would like to see in the Plan.

The consultation was promoted via Council's website, media releases and social media posts on Council's Facebook page. 85 people provided their feedback. 81 via Have Your Say, 1 uploaded submission and 3 email submissions.

Outcomes of the feedback were used to inform refinement of strategies outlined in the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan. The following provides an overall snapshot of results through the analysis of community feedback responses received:

- 2.1 16 submitters made positive comments about the DAMP initiatives;
- 2.2 17 respondents expressed concern regarding dog poo not being picked up by dog owners and suggested that Council install dog poos bags in dog off leash areas or implement other waste disposal initiatives;
- 2.3 16 respondents were unsupportive of the proposal to limit the number of dogs that a dog walker can walk in a park at any one time;
- 2.4 A small number of respondents (4) wanted increased patrols by Animal Management Officers; were opposed to dog off leash areas in the St Kilda Botanical Gardens and thought the focus on registration may be considered as revenue raising;
- 2.5 Four respondents wrote in support of extending dogs off leash areas in early mornings along the beach (5.30am to 9.30am) and comments were also received regarding specific beaches (2) for Elwood, (1) for St Kilda Beach and (1) for New Beach) either in support or against changes;

- 2.6 16 respondents did not want any limits placed on the number of dogs that can be walked by one dog walker and this action has been removed from the plan;
- 2.7 Five respondents were concerned about cats wandering at night and impacting on wildlife;
- 2.8 Six respondents wanted improved signage to improve compliance with restrictions or encourage responsible pet ownership;
- 2.9 17 respondents were concerned about the impact of dog poos and wanted either dog poos bags or other waste disposal initiatives considered;
- 2.10 Six respondents wanted fencing in parks including Gasworks Park (2), Alma Park (2), Lagoon Reserve (1) and generally (2);