

Closed

Survey on draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025

Managing dogs and cats in Knox

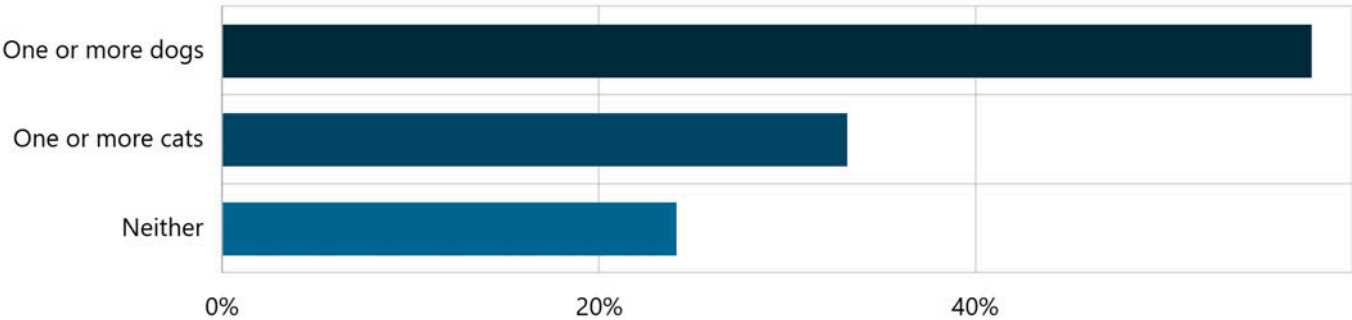
343Contributors

351Contributions

Contribution Summary

1. Do you own any of the following? Select all that apply Required

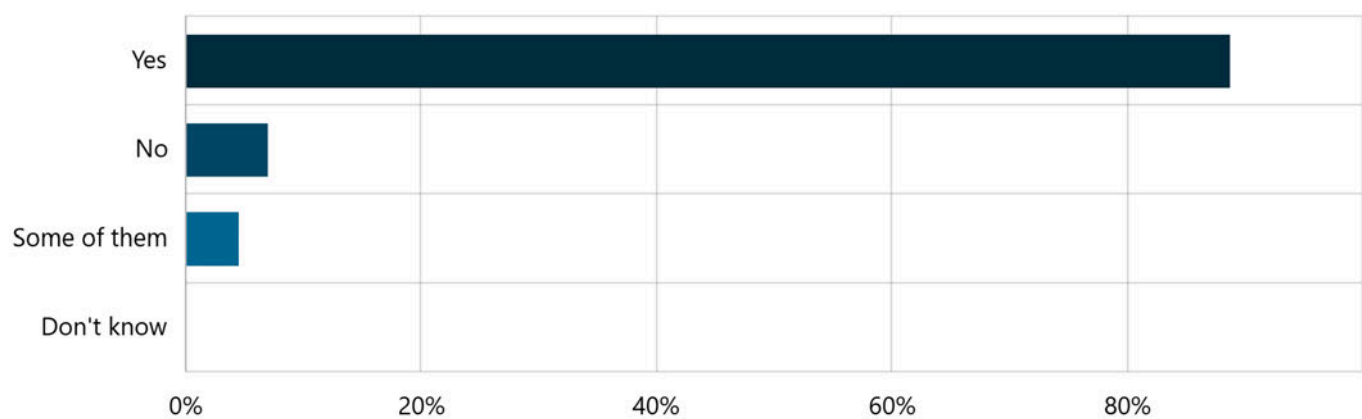
Multi Choice | Skipped: -2 | Answered: 353 (100.6%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
One or more dogs	57.79%	204
One or more cats	33.14%	117
Neither	24.08%	85

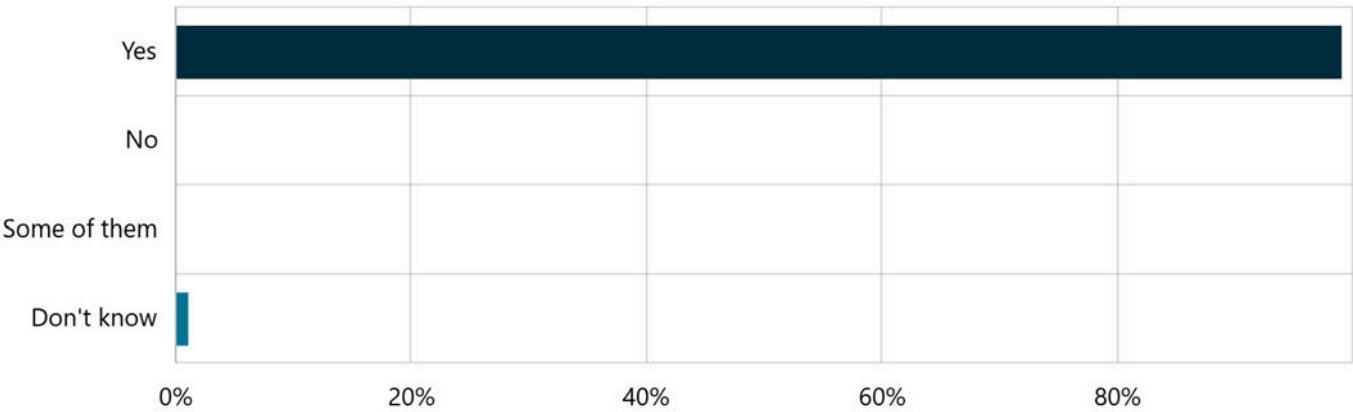
2. Are your dogs desexed?

Multi Choice | Skipped: 148 | Answered: 203 (57.8%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	88.67%	180
No	6.90%	14
Some of them	4.43%	9
Don't know	0%	0
Total	100.00%	203

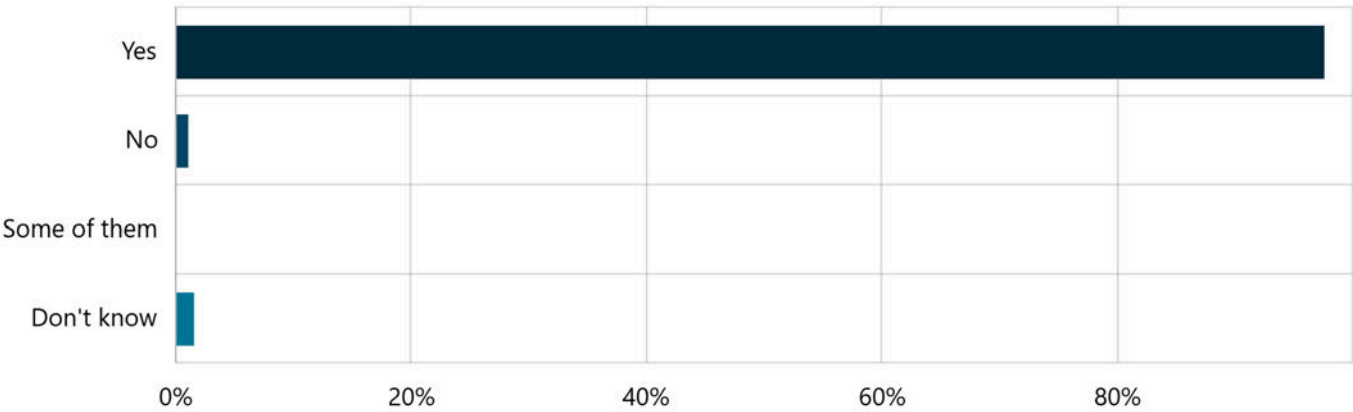
3. Are your dogs microchipped?
Multi Choice | Skipped: 148 | Answered: 203 (57.8%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	99.01%	201
No	0%	0
Some of them	0%	0
Don't know	0.99%	2
Total	100.00%	203

4. Are your dogs registered with Council?

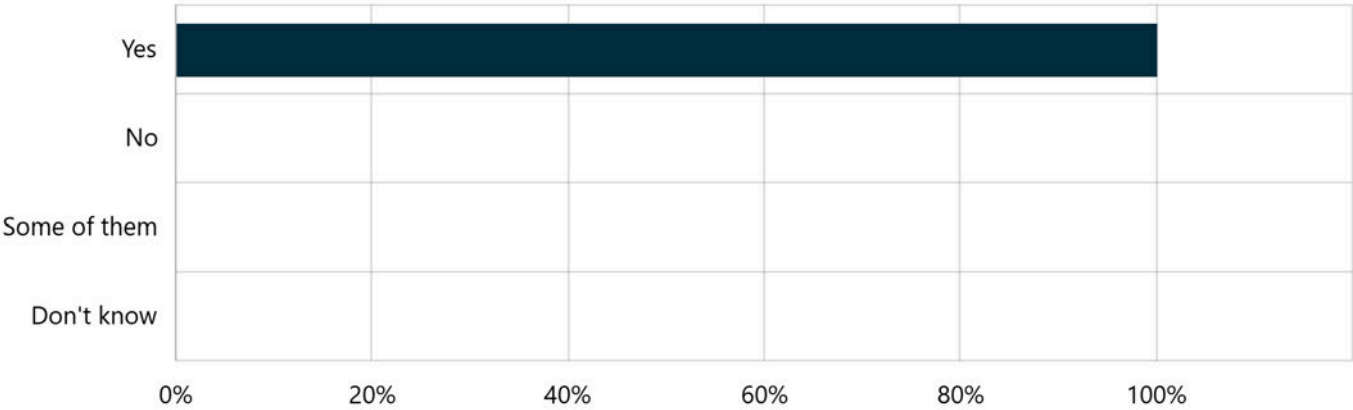
Multi Choice | Skipped: 148 | Answered: 203 (57.8%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	97.54%	198
No	0.99%	2
Some of them	0%	0
Don't know	1.48%	3
Total	100.00%	203

5. Are your cats desexed?

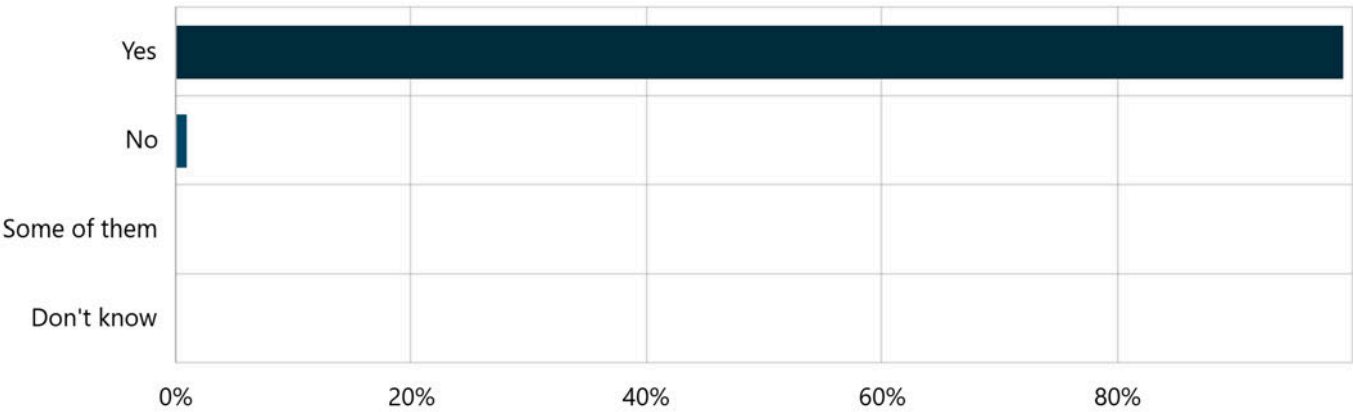
Multi Choice | Skipped: 235 | Answered: 116 (33%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	100.00%	116
No	0%	0
Some of them	0%	0
Don't know	0%	0
Total	100.00%	116

6. Are your cats microchipped?

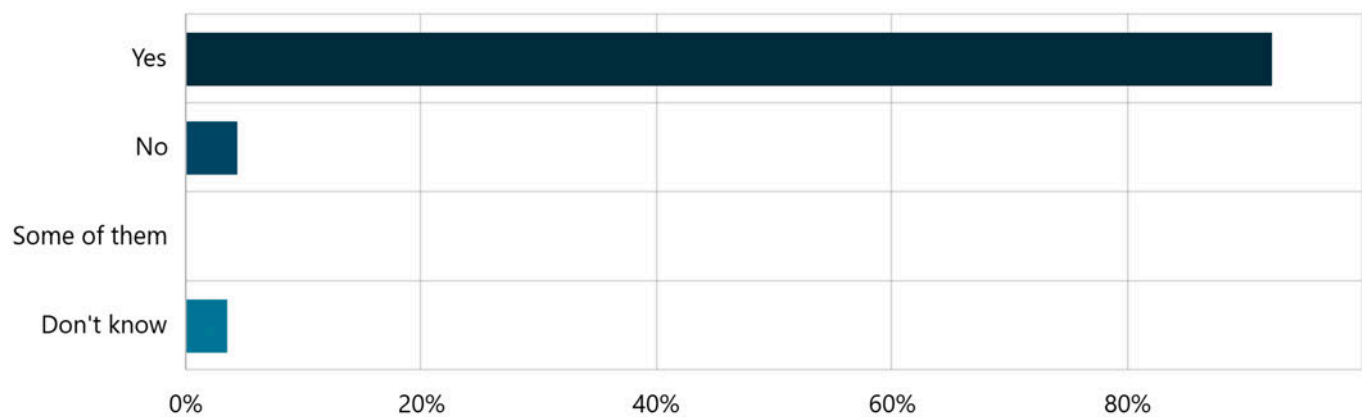
Multi Choice | Skipped: 235 | Answered: 116 (33%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	99.14%	115
No	0.86%	1
Some of them	0%	0
Don't know	0%	0
Total	100.00%	116

7. Are your cats registered with Council?

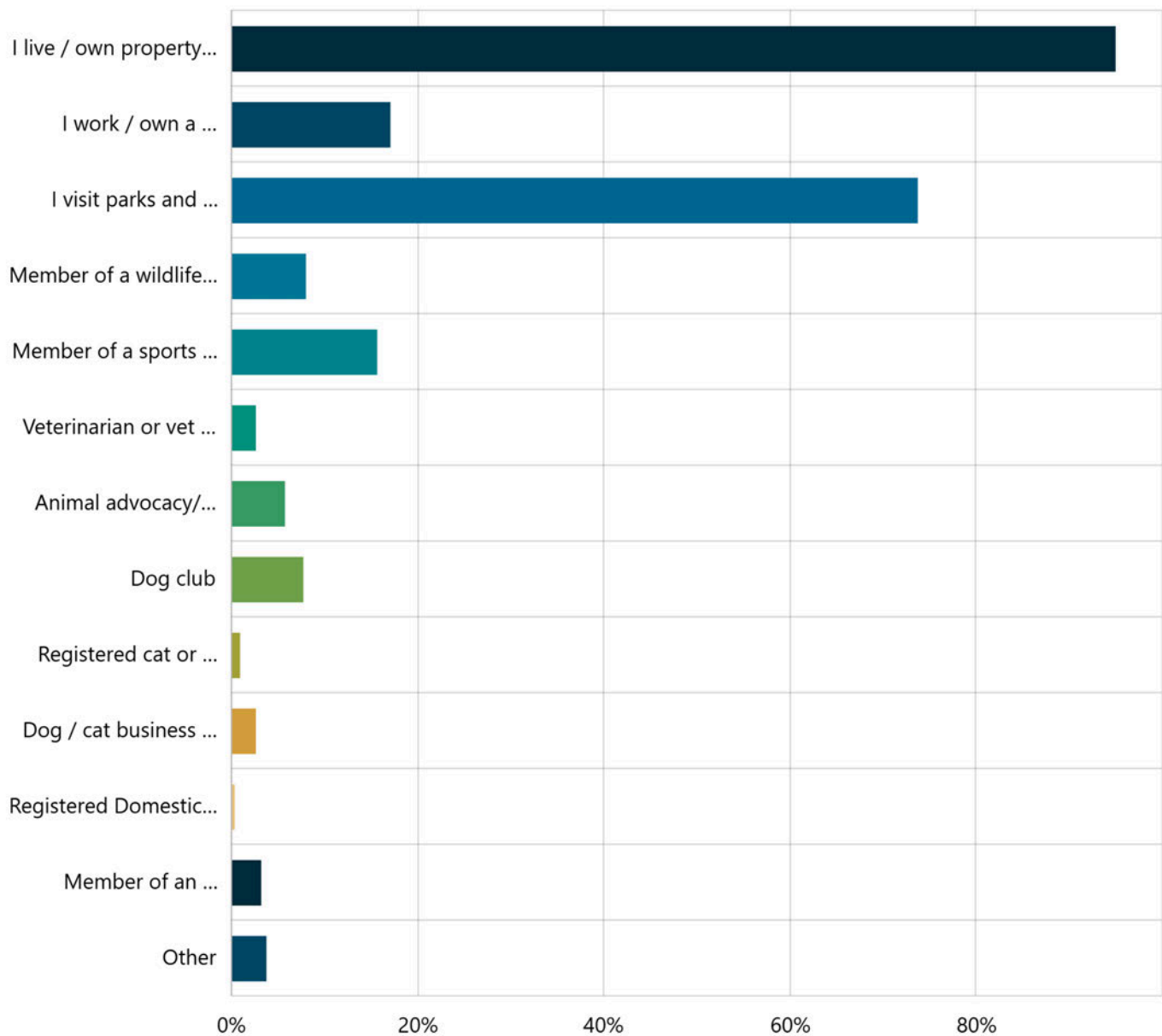
Multi Choice | Skipped: 235 | Answered: 116 (33%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	92.24%	107
No	4.31%	5
Some of them	0%	0
Don't know	3.45%	4
Total	100.00%	116

8. To help us understand your connection to dogs and cats in Knox, can you tell us if you are a member of any of these groups or categories? Select all that apply. Required

Multi Choice | Skipped: -2 | Answered: 353 (100.6%)

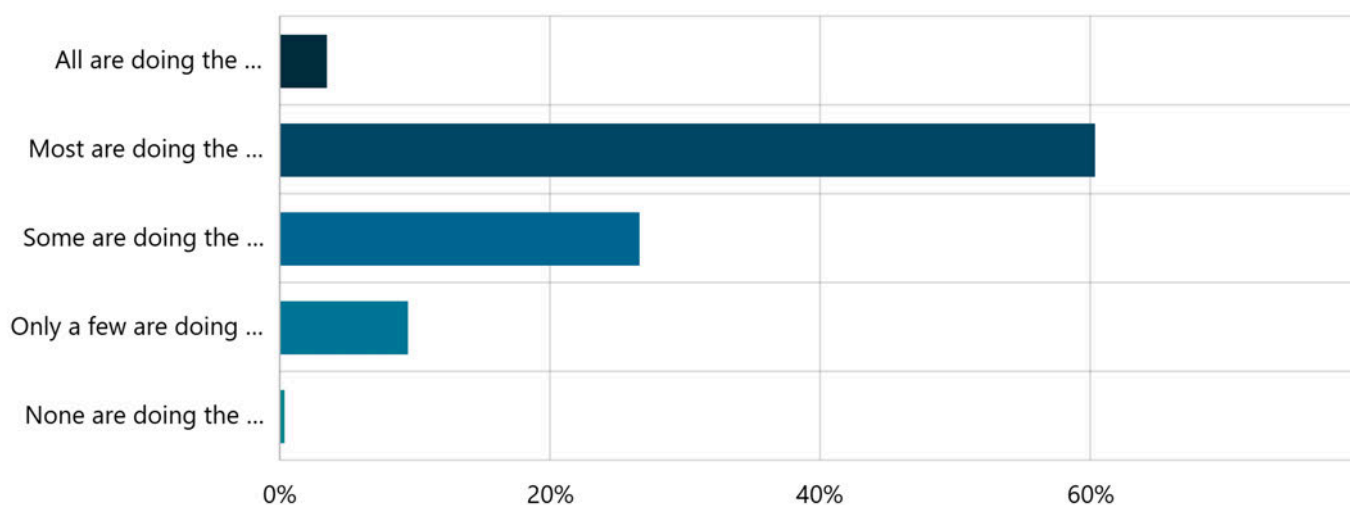


Answer choices	Percent	Count
I live / own property in Knox	94.90%	335
I work / own a business in Knox	17.00%	60
I visit parks and reserves in Knox	73.65%	260
Member of a wildlife or environmental group in Knox	7.93%	28
Member of a sports club in Knox	15.58%	55
Veterinarian or vet nurse	2.55%	9

Animal advocacy/rescue group	5.67%	20
Dog club	7.65%	27
Registered cat or dog breeder	0.85%	3
Dog / cat business operator (animal behaviourist/trainer/walker)	2.55%	9
Registered Domestic Animal Business operator	0.28%	1
Member of an applicable organisation (e.g. Dogs VIC, ANCats)	3.12%	11
Other	3.68%	13

9. How would you describe your everyday experience of dogs and their owners in the community?

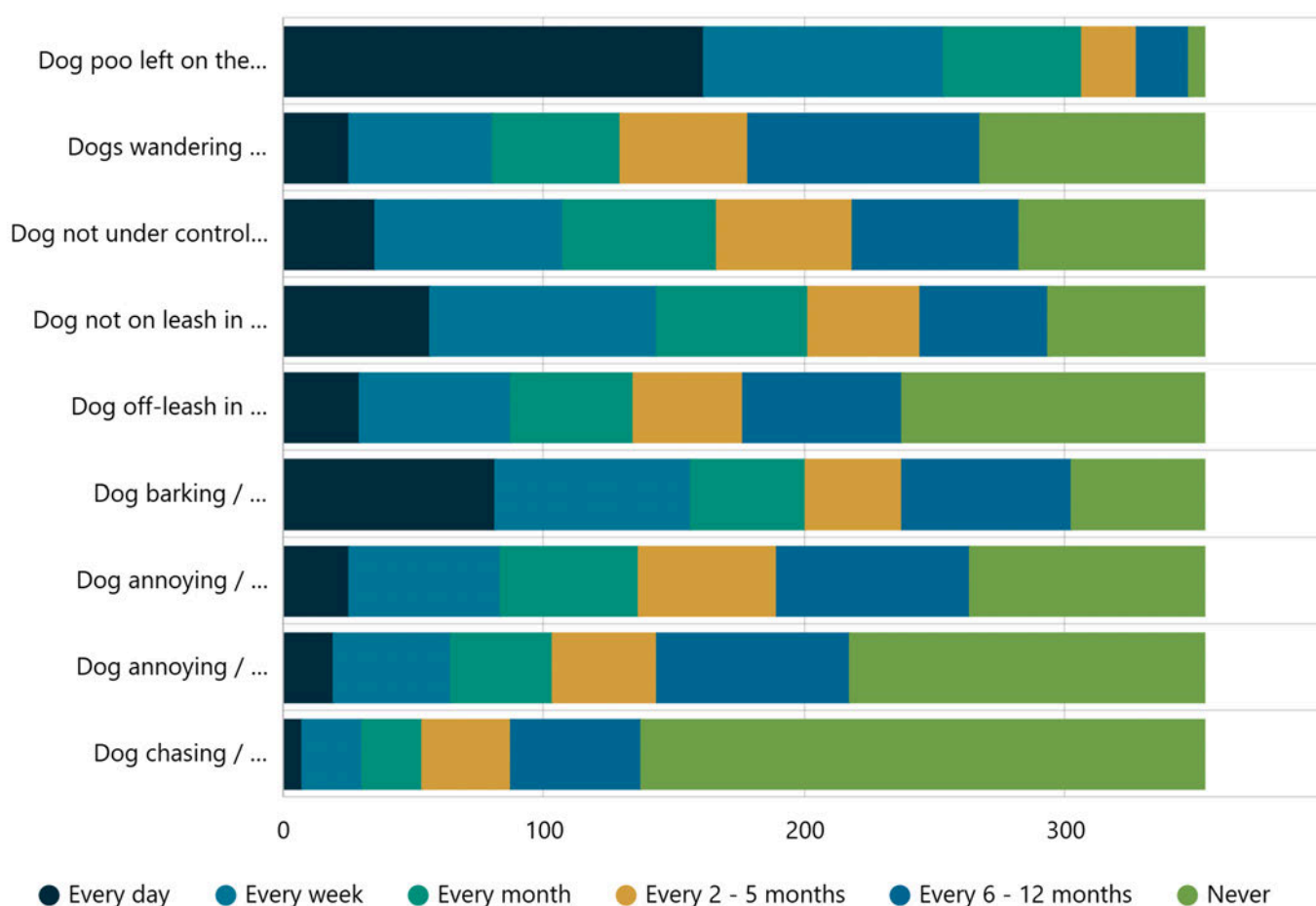
Multi Choice | Skipped: 1 | Answered: 350 (99.7%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
All are doing the right thing	3.43%	12
Most are doing the right thing	60.29%	211
Some are doing the right thing	26.57%	93
Only a few are doing the right thing	9.43%	33
None are doing the right thing	0.29%	1
Total	100.00%	350

10. In the last year, how often have you seen any of these dog related problems in Knox? Required

Matrix | Skipped: -2 | Answered: 353 (100.6%)

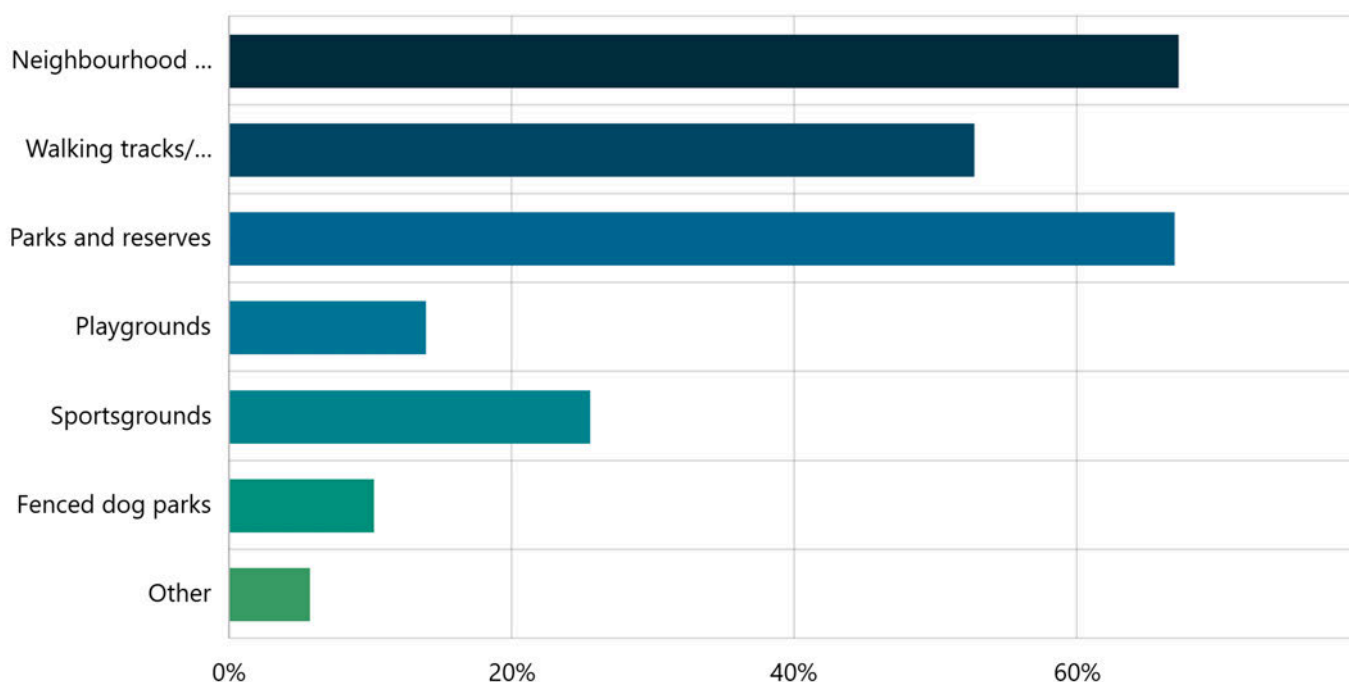


	Every day	Every week	Every month	Every 2 - 5 months	Every 6 - 12 months	Never	Count	Score
Dog poo left on the ground	45.61% 161	26.06% 92	15.01% 53	5.95% 21	5.67% 20	1.70% 6	353	2.05
Dogs wandering loose or without an owner	7.08% 25	15.58% 55	13.88% 49	13.88% 49	25.21% 89	24.36% 86	353	4.08
Dog not under control of its owner in off-leash areas	9.92% 35	20.40% 72	16.71% 59	14.73% 52	18.13% 64	20.11% 71	353	3.71
Dog not on leash in on-leash area	15.86% 56	24.65% 87	16.43% 58	12.18% 43	13.88% 49	17.00% 60	353	3.35
Dog off-	8.22% 29	16.43% 58	13.31% 47	11.90% 42	17.28% 61	32.86% 116	353	4.12

leash in playgrounds	29	58	47	42	61	116		
Dog barking / causing a nuisance	22.95% 81	21.25% 75	12.46% 44	10.48% 37	18.41% 65	14.45% 51	353	3.24
Dog annoying / intimidating other dogs	7.08% 25	16.43% 58	15.01% 53	15.01% 53	20.96% 74	25.50% 90	353	4.03
Dog annoying / intimidating other people	5.38% 19	12.75% 45	11.05% 39	11.33% 40	20.96% 74	38.53% 136	353	4.45
Dog chasing / attacking wildlife	1.98% 7	6.52% 23	6.52% 23	9.63% 34	14.16% 50	61.19% 216	353	5.11

11. What are the main places you see these problems? Select up to 3. Required

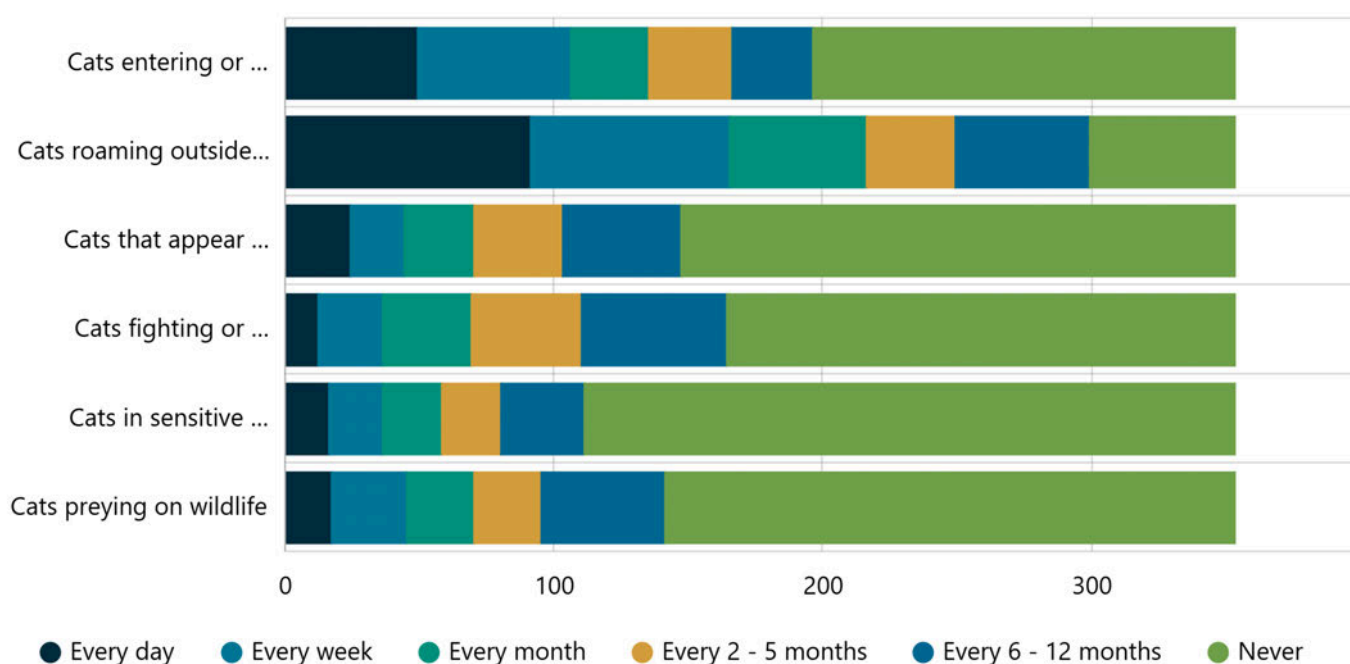
Multi Choice | Skipped: -2 | Answered: 353 (100.6%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Neighbourhood footpaths	67.14%	237
Walking tracks/shared paths	52.69%	186
Parks and reserves	66.86%	236
Playgrounds	13.88%	49
Sportsgrounds	25.50%	90
Fenced dog parks	10.20%	36
Other	5.67%	20

12. In the last year, how often have you seen any of these cat related problems in Knox? Required

Matrix | Skipped: -2 | Answered: 353 (100.6%)

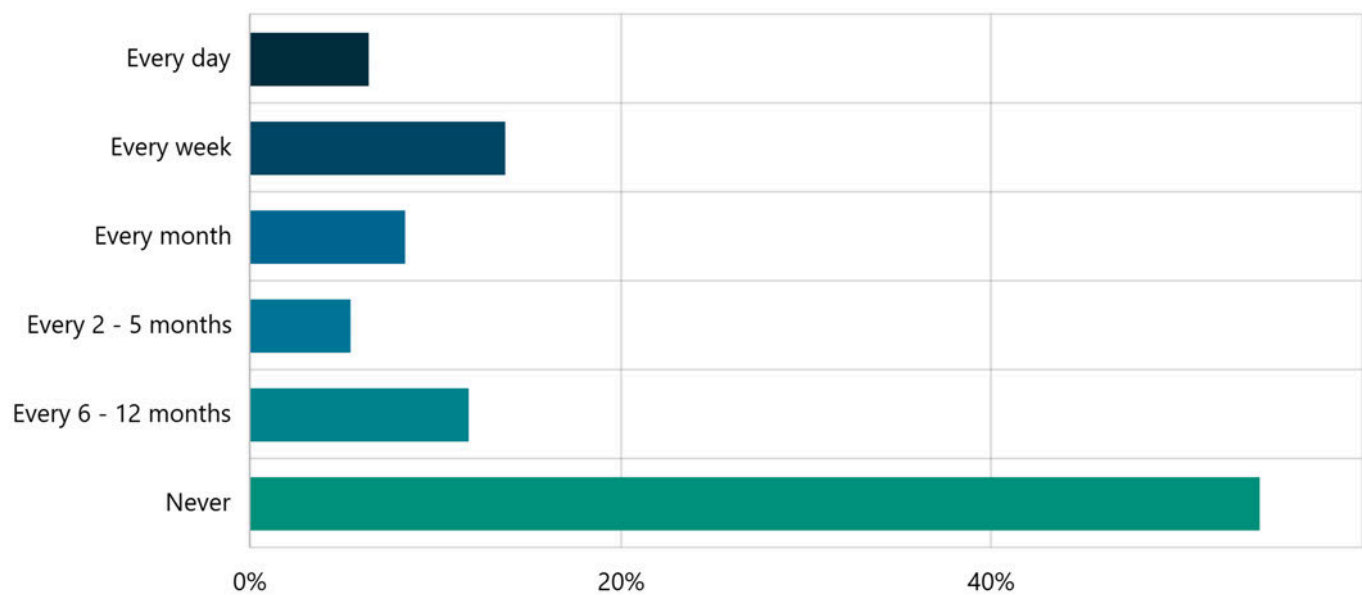


	Every day	Every week	Every month	Every 2 - 5 months	Every 6 - 12 months	Never	Count	Score
Cats entering or causing a nuisance on your property (eg cats digging, toileting)	13.88% 49	16.15% 57	8.22% 29	8.78% 31	8.50% 30	44.48% 157	353	4.15
Cats roaming outside their own property	25.78% 91	20.96% 74	14.45% 51	9.35% 33	14.16% 50	15.30% 54	353	3.11
Cats that appear unowned (strays)	6.80% 24	5.67% 20	7.37% 26	9.35% 33	12.46% 44	58.36% 206	353	4.90
Cats fighting or making loud noises	3.40% 12	6.80% 24	9.35% 33	11.61% 41	15.30% 54	53.54% 189	353	4.89
Cats in sensitive environmental areas or reserves	4.53% 16	5.67% 20	6.23% 22	6.23% 22	8.78% 31	68.56% 242	353	5.15

Cats preying on wildlife	4.82% 17	7.93% 28	7.08% 25	7.08% 25	13.03% 46	60.06% 212	353	4.96
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13. How often do you use fenced off-leash dog parks in Knox? Required

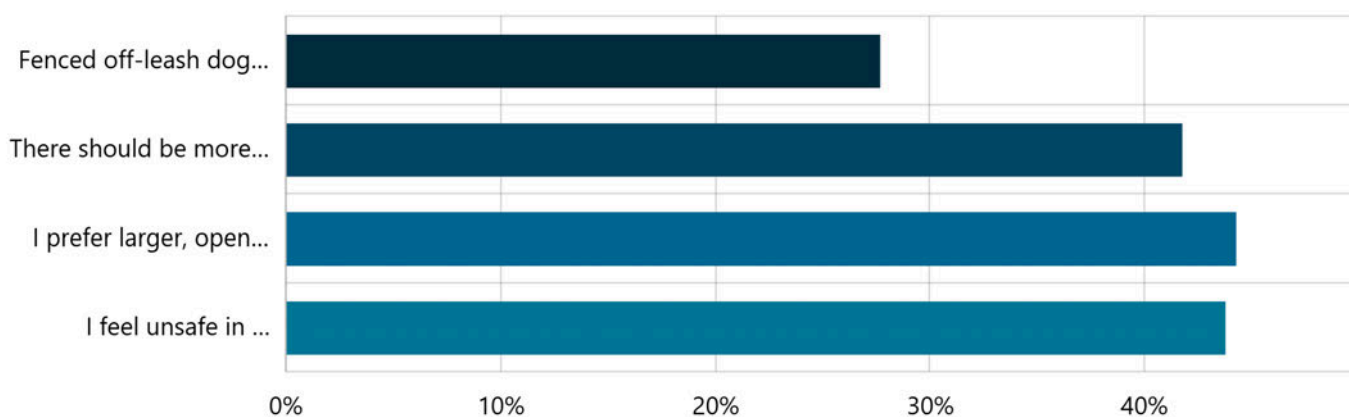
Multi Choice | Skipped: 147 | Answered: 204 (58.1%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Every day	6.37%	13
Every week	13.73%	28
Every month	8.33%	17
Every 2 - 5 months	5.39%	11
Every 6 - 12 months	11.76%	24
Never	54.41%	111
Total	100.00%	204

14. Do you agree with any of these statements? Select all that apply.

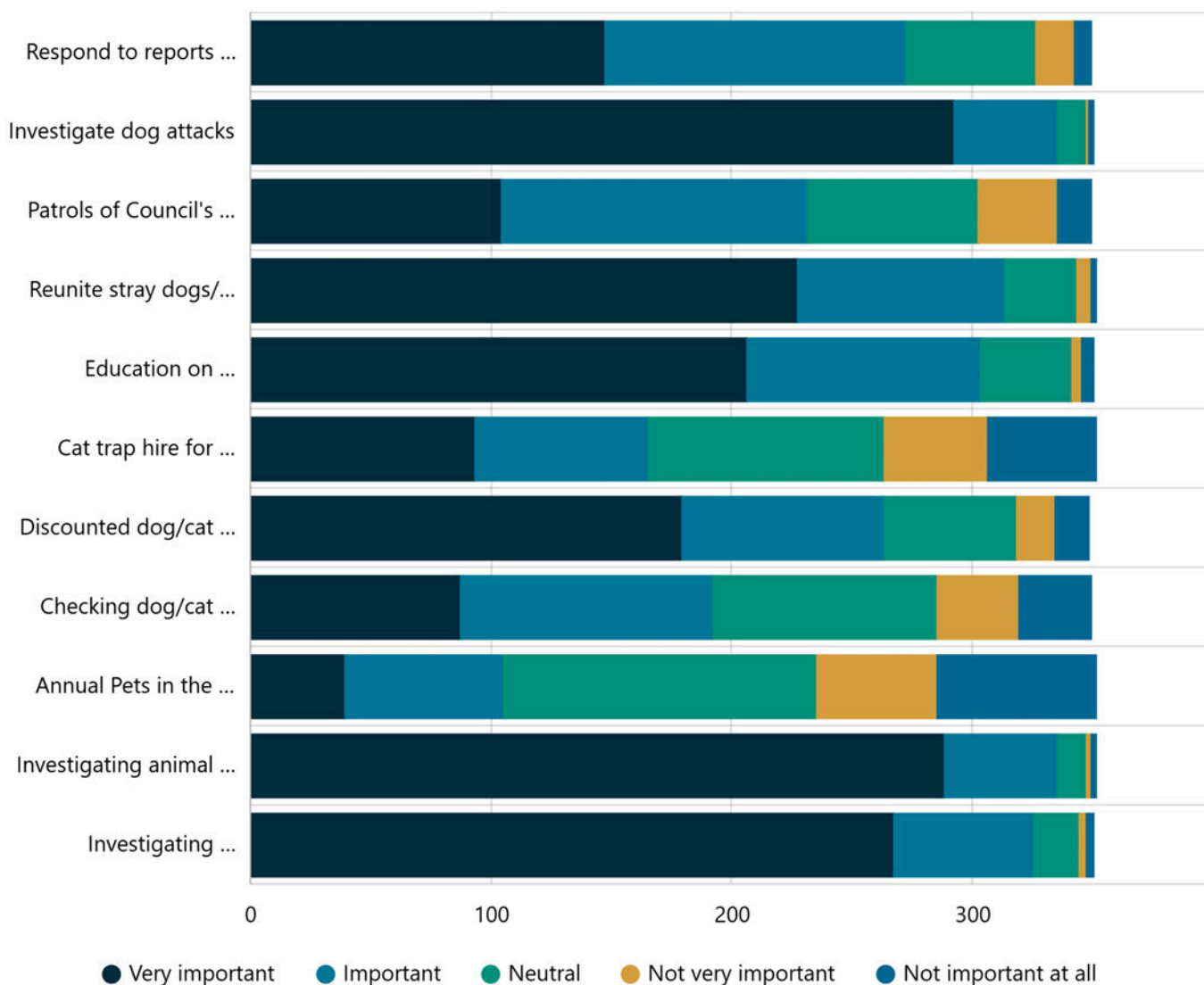
Multi Choice | Skipped: 152 | Answered: 199 (56.7%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Fenced off-leash dog parks give me piece of mind	27.64%	55
There should be more fenced off-leash dog parks	41.71%	83
I prefer larger, open off-leash areas over fenced dog parks	44.22%	88
I feel unsafe in fenced off-leash dog parks	43.72%	87

15. How important are the following services for the community?

Matrix | Skipped: -1 | Answered: 352 (100.3%)



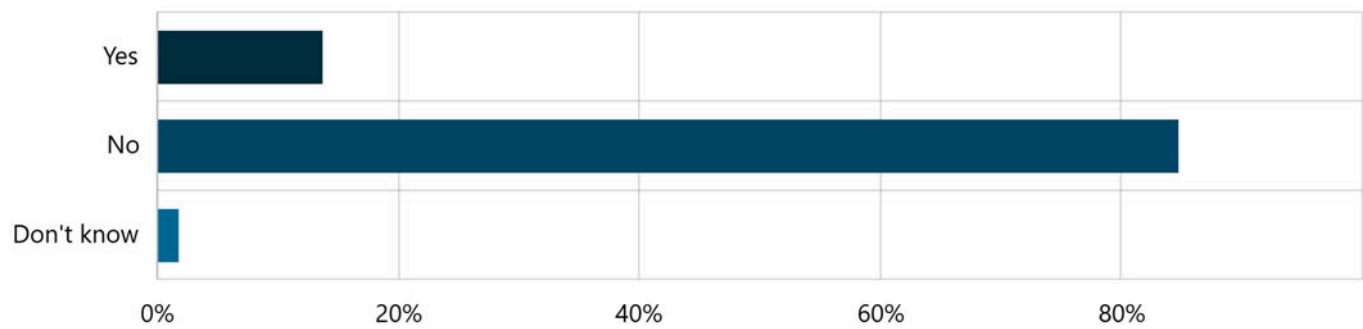
	Very important	Important	Neutral	Not very important	Not important at all	Count	Score
Respond to reports of nuisance dogs/cats	42.12% 147	35.82% 125	15.47% 54	4.58% 16	2.01% 7	349	1.89
Investigate dog attacks	83.43% 292	12.29% 43	3.43% 12	0.29% 1	0.57% 2	350	1.22
Patrols of Council's parks and reserves	29.80% 104	36.39% 127	20.34% 71	9.46% 33	4.01% 14	349	2.21
Reunite stray dogs/cats	64.67% 227	24.50% 86	8.55% 30	1.71% 6	0.57% 2	351	1.49

with owners

Education on responsible pet ownership	58.86% 206	27.71% 97	10.86% 38	1.14% 4	1.43% 5	350	1.59
Cat trap hire for residents	26.50% 93	20.51% 72	27.92% 98	12.25% 43	12.82% 45	351	2.64
Discounted dog/cat desexing for pensioners	51.44% 179	24.14% 84	15.80% 55	4.60% 16	4.02% 14	348	1.86
Checking dog/cat registrations	24.93% 87	30.09% 105	26.65% 93	9.74% 34	8.60% 30	349	2.47
Annual Pets in the Park event	11.11% 39	18.80% 66	37.04% 130	14.25% 50	18.80% 66	351	3.11
Investigating animal cruelty matters	82.05% 288	13.39% 47	3.42% 12	0.57% 2	0.57% 2	351	1.24
Investigating non-compliant dog/cat breeders	76.29% 267	16.57% 58	5.43% 19	0.86% 3	0.86% 3	350	1.33

16. Have you had any interaction with Council's Community Laws team in the last 12 months regarding dogs or cats?

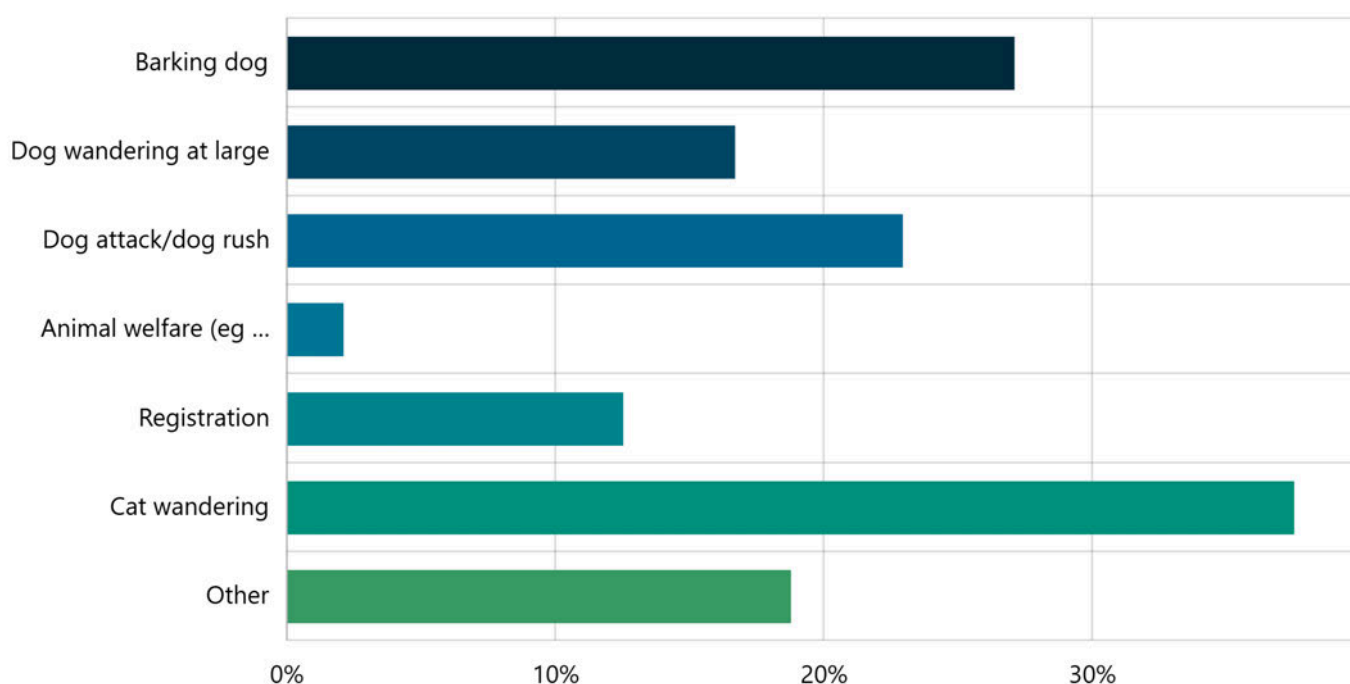
Multi Choice | Skipped: -1 | Answered: 352 (100.3%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	13.64%	48
No	84.66%	298
Don't know	1.70%	6
Total	100.00%	352

17. What was your enquiry/interaction about? Select all that apply.

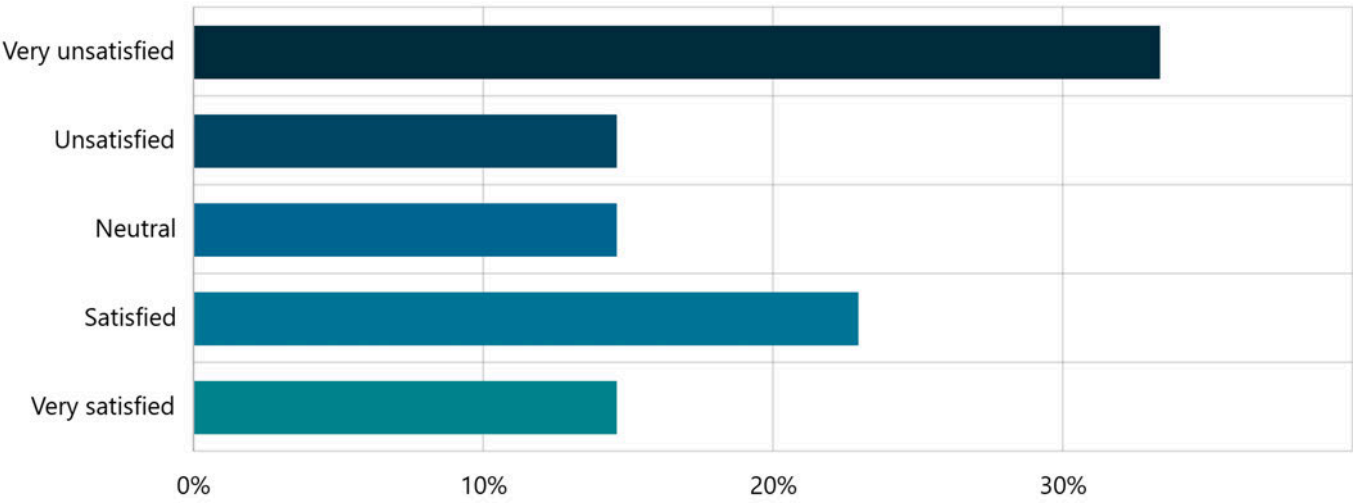
Multi Choice | Skipped: 303 | Answered: 48 (13.7%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Barking dog	27.08%	13
Dog wandering at large	16.67%	8
Dog attack/dog rush	22.92%	11
Animal welfare (eg animal wellbeing, injured animal etc)	2.08%	1
Registration	12.50%	6
Cat wandering	37.50%	18
Other	18.75%	9

18. How would you rate your experience with Council's animal management service?

Multi Choice | Skipped: 303 | Answered: 48 (13.7%)

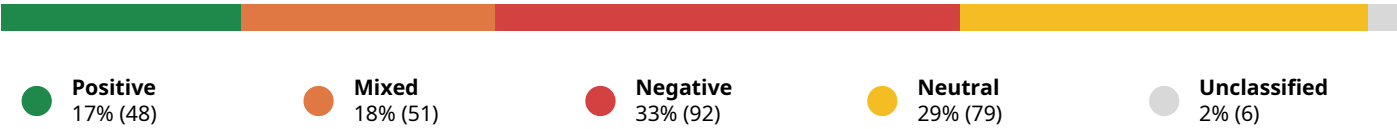


Answer choices	Percent	Count
Very unsatisfied	33.33%	16
Unsatisfied	14.58%	7
Neutral	14.58%	7
Satisfied	22.92%	11
Very satisfied	14.58%	7
Total	100.00%	48

19. Do you have any further comments or suggestions on how we can improve the management of cats and dogs in Knox?

Long Text | Skipped: 75 | Answered: 276 (78.6%)

Sentiment



Tags

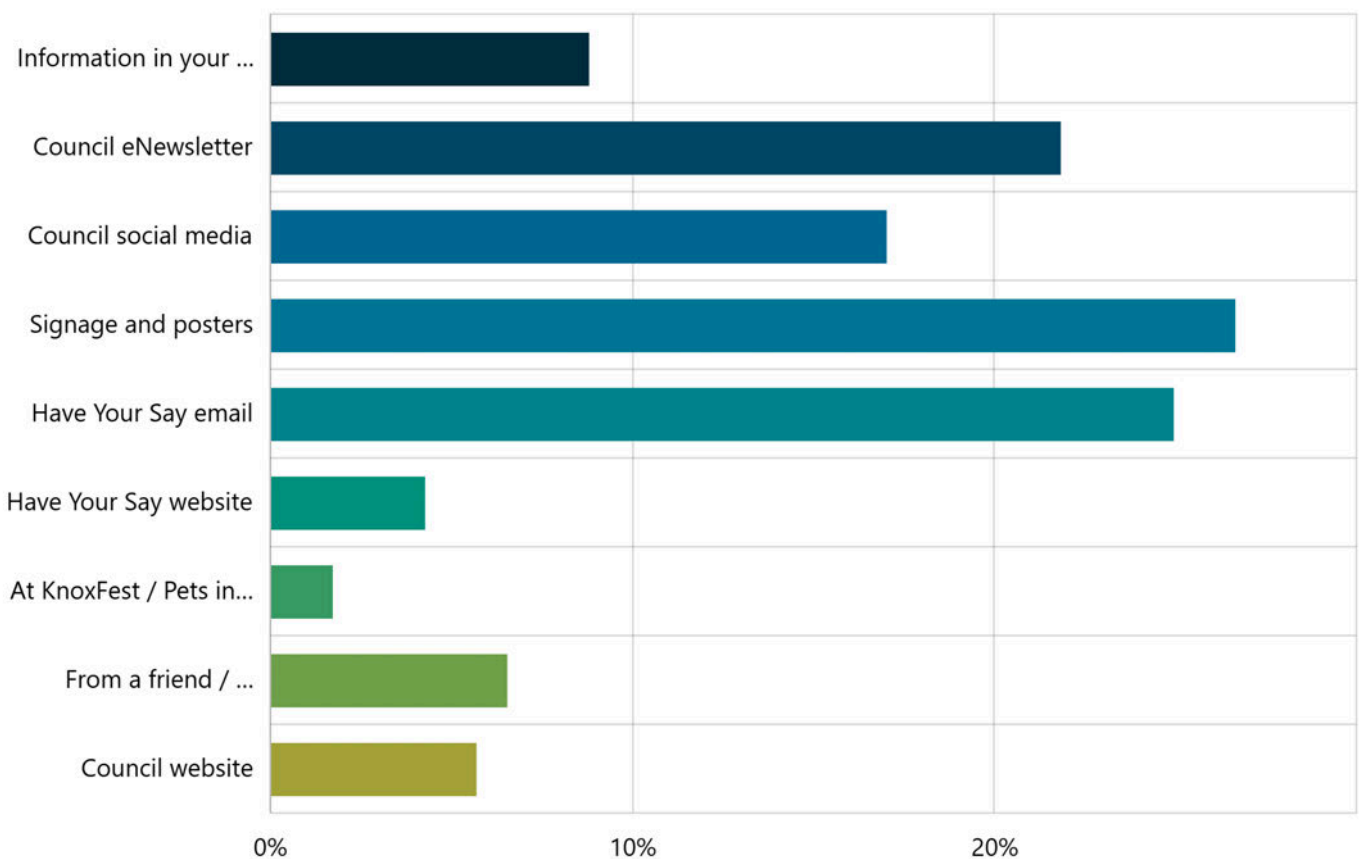
No tag data

Featured Contributions

No featured contributions

20. Where did you find out about this engagement? Required

Multi Choice | Skipped: -2 | Answered: 353 (100.6%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Information in your pet registration letter	8.78%	31
Council eNewsletter	21.81%	77
Council social media	17.00%	60
Signage and posters	26.63%	94
Have Your Say email	24.93%	88
Have Your Say website	4.25%	15
At KnoxFest / Pets in the Park	1.70%	6
From a friend / family member	6.52%	23
Council website	5.67%	20

21. Year of Birth Required

Number | Skipped: -2 | Answered: 353 (100.6%)

1987

Contribution 353 of 353 | 16 April 2025

1963

Contribution 352 of 353 | 16 April 2025

1981

Contribution 351 of 353 | 16 April 2025

1900

Contribution 350 of 353 | 16 April 2025

2001

Contribution 349 of 353 | 16 April 2025

1963

Contribution 348 of 353 | 15 April 2025

1985

Contribution 347 of 353 | 13 April 2025

1999

Contribution 346 of 353 | 13 April 2025

1976

Contribution 345 of 353 | 13 April 2025

1990

Contribution 344 of 353 | 13 April 2025

1986

Contribution 343 of 353 | 13 April 2025

1966

Contribution 342 of 353 | 13 April 2025

1958
Contribution 341 of 353 | 12 April 2025

1985
Contribution 340 of 353 | 12 April 2025

1986
Contribution 339 of 353 | 12 April 2025

1993
Contribution 338 of 353 | 12 April 2025

1977
Contribution 337 of 353 | 11 April 2025

2019
Contribution 336 of 353 | 11 April 2025

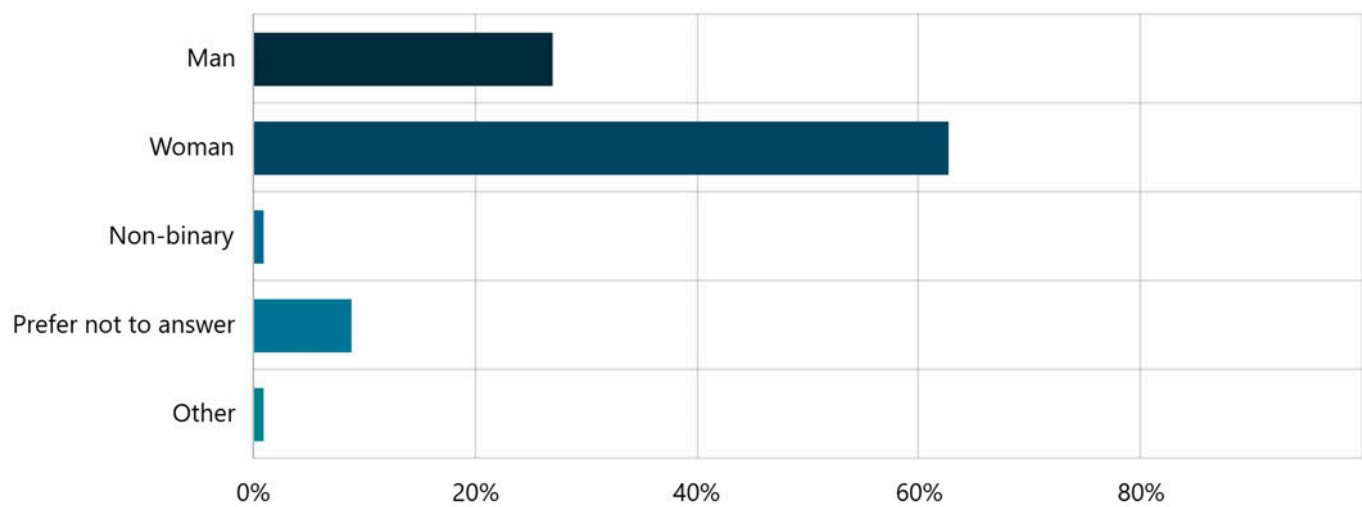
1948
Contribution 335 of 353 | 11 April 2025

1946
Contribution 334 of 353 | 11 April 2025

Showing 20 latest contributions only. Please see the data results for all contributions to this question.

22. How do you describe your gender? Required

Select Box | Skipped: -2 | Answered: 353 (100.6%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Man	26.91%	95
Woman	62.61%	221
Non-binary	0.85%	3
Prefer not to answer	8.78%	31
Other	0.85%	3
Total	100.00%	353

23. Suburb Required

Short Text | Skipped: -2 | Answered: 353 (100.6%)

Rowville

Contribution 353 of 353 | 16 April 2025

Upper Ferntree Gully

Contribution 352 of 353 | 16 April 2025

Ferntree Gully

Contribution 351 of 353 | 16 April 2025

Boronia

Contribution 350 of 353 | 16 April 2025

Boronia

Contribution 349 of 353 | 16 April 2025

Boronia

Contribution 348 of 353 | 15 April 2025

3153

Contribution 347 of 353 | 13 April 2025

Rowville

Contribution 346 of 353 | 13 April 2025

Wantirna

Contribution 345 of 353 | 13 April 2025

Upper Ferntree Gully

Contribution 344 of 353 | 13 April 2025

Wantirna South

Contribution 343 of 353 | 13 April 2025

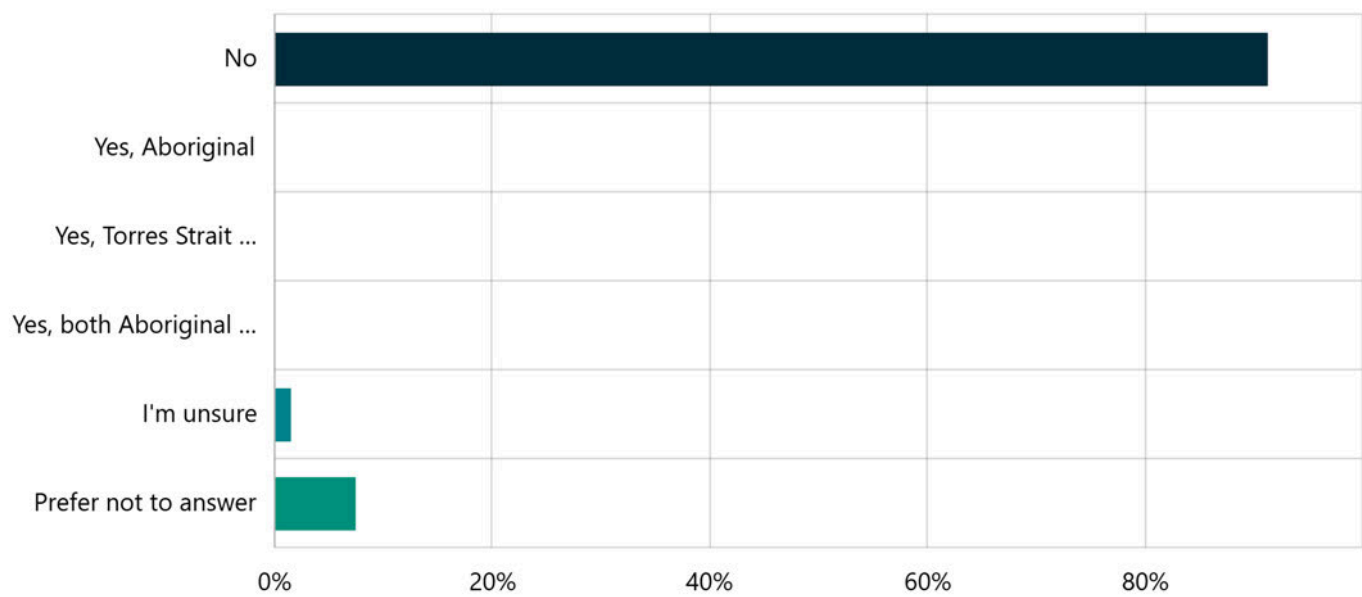
Upper FERNTREE GULLY

Contribution 342 of 353 | 13 April 2025

<p>Wantirna Contribution 341 of 353 12 April 2025</p>
<p>Ferntree Gully Contribution 340 of 353 12 April 2025</p>
<p>Rowville Contribution 339 of 353 12 April 2025</p>
<p>Ferntree Gully Contribution 338 of 353 12 April 2025</p>
<p>Rowville Contribution 337 of 353 11 April 2025</p>
<p>All Knox suburbs Contribution 336 of 353 11 April 2025</p>
<p>Wantirna South Contribution 335 of 353 11 April 2025</p>
<p>Ferntree Gully Contribution 334 of 353 11 April 2025</p>
<p>Showing 20 latest contributions only. Please see the data results for all contributions to this question.</p>

24. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin? Required

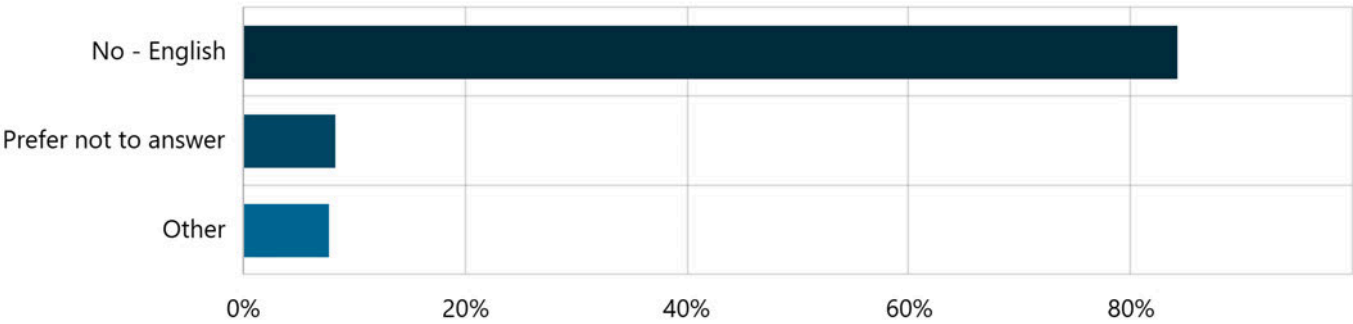
Select Box | Skipped: -2 | Answered: 353 (100.6%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
No	91.22%	322
Yes, Aboriginal	0%	0
Yes, Torres Strait Islander	0%	0
Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	0%	0
I'm unsure	1.42%	5
Prefer not to answer	7.37%	26
Total	100.00%	353

25. Do you speak a language other than English at home? (including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language) Required

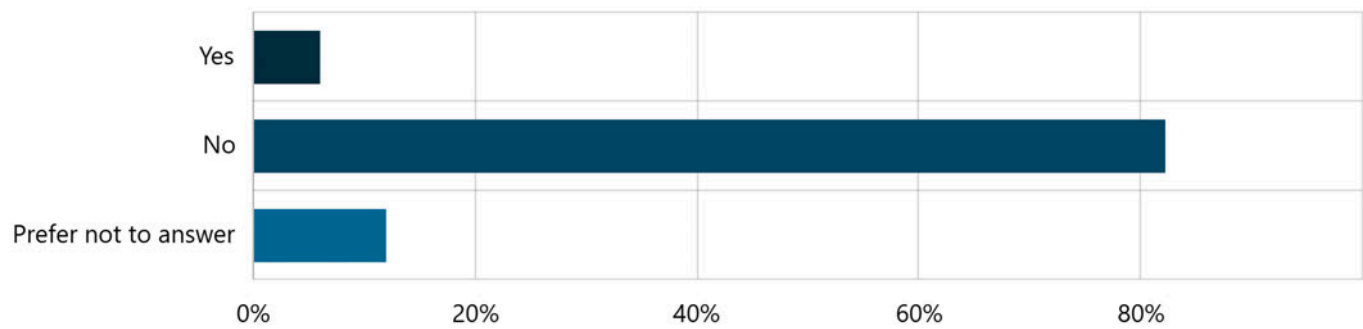
Multi Choice | Skipped: -2 | Answered: 353 (100.6%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
No - English	84.14%	297
Prefer not to answer	8.22%	29
Other	7.65%	27
Total	100.00%	353

26. Do you identify as part of the LGBTQI+ community? (i.e lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or gender diverse, intersex, queer or questioning) Required

Select Box | Skipped: -2 | Answered: 353 (100.6%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	5.95%	21
No	82.15%	290
Prefer not to answer	11.90%	42
Total	100.00%	353

Emails Sent to DAM Plan Inbox

I'm happy to see that the council has finally acknowledged that there is a problem within Knox. I've had to put up with 2 [REDACTED] dogs constant barking hour after hour day after day. Extremely stressful!!! Ruined my daughter's wedding as I only had 2-1/2 hours sleep because of the dogs barking into the early hours of the morning. Have complained numerous times to council and the owner but nothing eventuates. Falls on deaf ears. The [REDACTED] owner just doesn't care! Other neighbours have complained to the owner as well. Would be happy to see that council enforce some kind of penalty or fines or even removal of dogs which makes the owner take responsibility for their dogs, this has been going on since 2019. Happy to discuss in further detail.

[REDACTED]
Hello

I am writing in response to your per management initiative.

We are responsible dog owners who pick up our dog waste and dispose of it responsibly, and keep our dogs on the leash! Unfortunately, this doesn't seem to be the case with many dog owners in Rowville, who think it's perfectly fine for their dog to run off leash, drop excrement anywhere, and for them to leave it. The reserve, the footpaths, naturestrips and even private gardens are covered. We have watched dog owners leaving droppings behind.

Also, dog owners think it's fine for their dog to run up to any and everyone, because "they're friendly", but not all dogs are, some dogs are terrified of other dogs, or reactive, and some PEOPLE are afraid of dogs. Allowing a dog to invade another's space without permission is selfish and irresponsible.

So, when you are planning for pet management, I hope you will consider these concerns.

Many thanks
[REDACTED]

Hi

Im just writing to express my concern over the number of dogs using the sporting oval [REDACTED].

Im the [REDACTED]

The ground is now one of the better ones in [REDACTED], but the constant clean up during the cricket season of dog poo & dug up potholes doesn't go all that well for the future condition of the ground. It's become exhausting when we play cricket there checking the day before we play to view the ground before we play & maintain it.

There is a dog park within 1km away.

We pay a lot of monies to use the ground, which the public community do not realise & becoming a maintenance ongoing issue must be disturbing for not only our club but the council.

I have attached a photo of potholes created by dogs this week.

Look forward to you maintaining our great ground into the future years without all the extra works that the council & our club are currently doing.



I don't know why I pay \$108 a year for two cats who don't EVER go outside. Why am I paying you for that? What does the council do for my cats? What do I get for my money? And don't say it's to catch them if they escape, because there are (and/or can be) seperate fines for that. Their pee and poo even goes into the toilet! One goes in the shower so there's no litter, and the other cat uses septic safe corn based litter. So please do tell me what y'all do for me with my \$108 a year.

Hello Knox Community Laws Team

My name is [REDACTED] and I am writing representing the committee and members of Bayswater Strikers Soccer Club.

We are fortunate that dog owners are broadly responsible at Guy Turner Reserve here at the moment but [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] would hate to see behaviours develop like I see at high profile sites [REDACTED] where dog owners claim the grounds as dog parks and broadly destroy the place.

For sports fields such as GTR our clubs position is:

- preference that it is on-lead

- if it isn't and behaviours change and increase such as digging and leftover waste, that a) community laws steps up its methods to proactively address, including education but probably enforcement where possible and b) that Council ensures that the sports fields team is adequately resourced to reactively and proactively fix holes, replace turf and treat grass for disease etc so the playability of the surfaces is not affected significantly

We are very happy to share this beautiful public asset, but dog owners have to play their part too and not let Lassie run 80m away, pooing, digging and worst case scenario injure a junior player. We will protect our players above all else and call for action if incidents ever occurred in that vein.

Please feel free to contact me at any stage if you would like to discuss further.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]
Bayswater Strikers Soccer Club

<https://www.bayswaterstrikers.com.au/>

Hi there,

I'm providing feedback for the management plan I've seen shared online. I wanted to do the online survey but it requires an account so I'm emailing instead.

My main issues are dogs barking for extended periods during the day and night, and roaming dogs.

2 out of 5 times that I walk the 700m path from my house to [REDACTED] shops, I will encounter a medium to large sized roaming dog. I assume that's lost or escaped. These dogs are not friendly and usually I back off and walk another way, because I do not feel safe passing a dog that's almost my size and not controlled.

To me this is a significant safety issue. I'm not sure what can be done about this tbh. I can't report it because it's not a crime, I'm not going to call the police cos I'm scared of a dog, and by the time the council or ranger comes out, the dog will have moved.

So I guess my email may be pointless in terms of proposed solutions, but I'd love it if the roaming dog issue could be solved.

Thanks

I would appreciate it if Knox provided dog poo bags at dog parks like many other councils do. Disease spreads in these parks if there isn't adequate means to dispose of such waste.

There are not enough large designated securely fenced dog parks.

While some small dogs, including my own, love playing with any breed there is a urgent need to have designated small dog only parks to separate small dogs and puppies from larger breeds. Even over enthusiasm of larger breeds can lead to small dogs and puppies becoming reactive because they feel intimidated and result in life long behavioural issues for the pup or smaller dog or expensive injury.

Adequate shelter from sun & rain and water for dogs and owners at dog parks would be appreciated.

Thanks for the opportunity to have input.

[REDACTED]

I am deeply concerned about the population of possums that has been increasing in the last few years to plague proportions. People say - they were here first and we are taking their homes. I say that there is more to the story.

There was a balance in the eco system. We live next to a huge forest where the possums can live and eat bush foods. However they choose to live in the roof of homes and in nests in pittosporum trees and bushy unkept areas and they choose to eat the fresh new green leaves of European trees, oak trees, elm trees, fruit trees before they go to the bushland to eat.

Possums are creatures of instinct, habit and convenience. They will eat the trees that are near their nests and they will keep returning to the same tree until the tree dies from trauma and being continually stripped of all its leaves. You will notice if you look closely - the possums start at the top of the trees and work their way down. So many trees die because they are stripped time and time again - branches are broken and there is no chance to grow fruit or nuts or seeds to continue the life cycle.

Possums have no consideration of sustainability - they do not eat a little from one tree and a little from another tree so that the ecosystem remains in balance. NO! they destroy one tree and move on to the next. I have had three plum trees stripped in my garden, one almond tree, one weeping mulberry tree, cherry tree stripped and my apricot and pear tree muched on also. I realise with the population of possums I will need to net everything from spring through to autumn if I want anything to survive.

It is not only the European trees that the possums eat. I have had two large gum trees stripped by the possums and they are dying. This is why I contacted the Knox Council to speak to an arborist to see what I can do. The arborist agreed that he is observing so many trees being stripped by the possums and he said it has been happening much more since there was a curfew put on cats. He said cats are the only predator for the possums and that it is a very drastic measure to take one element out of the ecosystem. It has allowed the possums to roam free and without hesitation to desicrate so many trees.

On my daily walk in the area I see signs of possum mischief everywhere and will send photos in the following emails.

We have brushtail possums that are not native to this area. They may be caught in traps and relocated. My [REDACTED] has been a [REDACTED] for more than ten years and [REDACTED] is noticing the plague population of possums. One sign is that he sees them out in day light now. He has trapped and removed 4 brush tail possums just in the last few months.

The otherkind of possum we have is the ring tail possum that is native to the area but I believe they are able to populate much more than they would in the bush

because they are eating the European trees so there is an unnatural increase in the number of possums being born and there is no predator to keep the population in check.

The ecosystem is being disrupted and as the arborist said - when you lose a beautiful old oak tree - you lose the home for many creatures and food for other creatures and the land may become barren, dry and lifeless if the balance is tipped over. There is a case where wolves were reintroduced into an area in America to restore the balance and here is a link to this :

<https://www.quora.com/How-was-the-reintroduction-of-wolves-helpful-to-the-ecosystem>

Ringtail possums do not go into the large cages or if they do enter the cage, they seem to be able to eat the fruit bait and leave without tipping the door to shut. For this reason the ring tail possums are very difficult to remove from an area and the nest in a tree may contain multiple families. There is a tree hanging over my fence from the neighbours and it gets stripped of leaves every few weeks. I went out one night to find 4 ring tail possums munching the leaves without a care. They run along my front verander and dangle their tails to tease my puppy dog and then proceed to eat all the leaves from my fruit trees.

I find this incredibly distressing and I also have a feeling of forboding about this area. If nothing is done to restore the balance to the ecosystem - the possums population will increase and work their way through every European tree and some gum trees until all we will have is a forest of pittosporum trees since the possums do not eat those. I say this because I have noticed that the possums have their first choice of tree to eat and when that tree is dead they move to their second choice, third choice and so eventually no tree will be safe or left sacred.

Everyone I speak to at markets or in the street feels exasperated with the possum situation. Their vegetable crops get dessicrated and people give up trying to grow anything.

I know that sustainability is an important issue for the Knox Council and there is some kind of project to take an inventory of trees and observe when trees die and why. I can say very clearly that one of the reasons why beautiful old oak trees and especially new European trees and gum trees die is because the possum population is in plague proportions and it is only going to grow and we will lose more trees until something is done to address this issue.

The balance of the ecosystem was fine with cats roaming the streets and I would like a review of the decision to put a curfew on cats. My observation is that the birds learn to fly out of the cat range once they know there is a predator in the garden and the owners can put a bell on the cat.

If the curfew was put on cats to save a few birds , the decision did not consider the wider implications of such a drastic measure. There is also the issue of rats and if there are no cats on the streets to keep down the number of rats, then more people will be using rat poison and the rats die and there is the risk of another animal eating the rat and the poison going up the food chain.

I will include photographs from my own garden and the neighbourhood and I assure you, once you recognise the signs of possum damage on trees - you will start to see it everywhere.

Please review the cat curfew.

Letting the cats roam the streets again would seem like the simplist most economic and natural way to restore balance in the ecosystem. Please take this issue seriously. A friend has three beautiful old oak trees in her garden that have been absolutely dessicrated by the possums and it is so heart breaking and devastating. You cannot put the plastic rings around all the trees because they overhang fences and the ring tail possums are acrobats and swing from the power lines and can jump and land in trees.

If there is a hesitation to hurt or harm the ring tail possums or a willful ignorance of the damage they cause in their growing populations- just know that in a few years we will not have any trees to enjoy in the area.

I speak from observing my garden in the last four years. They have recently been eating the leaves and breaking the branches of my crepe myrtle trees that are in pots - I love those trees, I love all my trees and I want to protect them but at night when the lights go out, the possums know that they can go and feast on the garden without fear. Possums do not understand sustainability. They live in the present moment fulfilling their basic needs - food, shelter, have babies and then have more babies and as a protected species in plague proportions - they are becoming the harbinger of much destruction in the ecosystem.

Please bring this issue to council,

[REDACTED]

Thank you for your time on the phone, and for these emails [REDACTED].

Hi,

Just wondering how to access the survey link. I have tried to open this link but it won't open. I would like to have a say in particular to dog owners having dogs off their leash and not cleaning up after their dogs. The [REDACTED] area is absolutely filthy particularly around the [REDACTED] Water areas. Dogs are defecating on the paths and owners are not cleaning up after them.

Also, the amount of dogs off their leash in the same area and on public streets is increasing and putting other dogs in danger of being attacked. This has already happened to our dog who is only small. This has happened twice in a short period of one month.

This is not acceptable and I really would like to have a say to have these issues rectified and followed up.

I am really looking forward to hearing from you on this same email address.

Thanking you in advance

[REDACTED]

Resident of [REDACTED]

Dear Council members,

We would like the continuation of the requirement that all dogs and cats must be restricted to the owner's property day and night. That would be a given for responsible pet ownership. Council needs to have a plan to follow up if this isn't happening.

Council could provide simple designs for 'cat runs' in backyards, which you may already do? There is no excuse for cats to be let out to roam in other peoples' properties.

We live near the forest and have noted that there are less cats about which is great but some still roam. They do enormous damage to our wildlife.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

[REDACTED]

I have prepared comments as input to your review of the above Plan. I trust these are helpful. They are based on our own experiences since we moved to [REDACTED] close to three years ago.

I would prefer that my name be treated confidentially and withheld from the public release. I have not put my name on the attached document for this reason.

Thank you.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

Dear Community Laws Team,

Re: Domestic Animal Management Plan

Please find attached the submission to your consultation for the Domestic Animal Management Plan on behalf of Professor Jacquie Rand, Executive Director and Chief Scientist of the Australian Pet Welfare Foundation.

Regards

Jenny

Dear Council Members,

I have become aware of a push in the Knox community to end the 24-hour cat curfew.

I am writing as a concerned resident and advocate for local wildlife to express my strong support for the upholding and enforcement of the 24-hour cat curfew in our community.

Free-roaming domestic cats may seem harmless, but research has shown they are anything but. A study by the University of Sydney has revealed that pet cats allowed to roam outdoors kill an estimated 390 million animals every year in Australia—an average of 186 reptiles, birds, and mammals per roaming cat. Many of these are native species, some already under threat from habitat loss and other human-related pressures.

Our unique Australian wildlife is a precious resource, and it is our responsibility to ensure its protection. Unrestrained cats contribute significantly to the decline of native animal populations, with small mammals and birds among the most vulnerable. Beyond the environmental cost, roaming cats themselves are at high risk of injury, disease, or getting lost, making curfews a matter of both ecological stewardship and animal welfare.

Some have argued that Community Cat Programs, particularly those that involve trap-neuter-return (TNR), help lower cat intake into shelters and free up resources for rehoming dogs. While this may reduce shelter numbers in the short term, it fails to address the broader ecological damage caused by leaving desexed cats outdoors. These cats continue to prey on wildlife, undermining conservation efforts. Protecting one group of animals should not come at the expense of others. A 24-hour cat curfew complements rescue and rehoming strategies by promoting responsible pet containment and reducing the burden on both wildlife and community resources.

By maintaining a 24-hour curfew, the council will be sending a strong message in support of biodiversity conservation and responsible pet ownership. Cat owners can still provide their pets with enriching, healthy lives indoors or in purpose-built outdoor enclosures, without the cost to native ecosystems.

I respectfully urge the council to uphold the 24-hour cat curfew and ensure proper measures are in place for community education and compliance. Such a policy reflects a proactive and compassionate approach to managing the coexistence of domestic animals and native wildlife.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Warm regards,

[Redacted Signature]

Dear Sir/Madam,

We like your policy of having cats enclosed/indoors.

Our caravan cover was shredded by a cat "sharpening its claws" over several nights.

We were happy with the service provided when we were able to borrow a cat trap from the Council. A cat was captured which was taken away next morning by a Council staff member.

We believe that we have more birds in our garden since cats have been enclosed.

These include birds that we have not seen or heard for some time.

We hope that the current trial of keeping cats enclosed/indoors is continued indefinitely.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

Sorry I was unable to log-in on your advertised email address.

I'm not a owner of Catsor Dogs but I do love them. My concern are Owners (not Dogs) picking up their dogs droppings in public space (most Dog owners are responsible people,) when I mention to them of their obligation I'm abused or told to mind my business. Seems more public education is needed.

G'day My Names [REDACTED] Im [REDACTED], Im A Runner, Cyclor, Hiker, Nature Lover. Congratulations On The Remarkable Work You Are Doing! I Live In [REDACTED] Right Next To [REDACTED] Almost In Knox! However My Question As I Wont Join Any Groups, And Social Media Is Hell On Earth. CAN YOU PLEASE TELL ME WHY! DOD OWNERS EVERYWHERE KNOW!! BAGS UP THERE DOG'S BUSINESS! AND LEAVES ON THE SIDE OF THE PATH!!!!?????!!!! IT IS ABSOLUTELY CRAZY!!!! WHATS WRONG WITH YOU PEOPLE?????

Sorry but its Wrong On All Levels YES?

To Whom It May Concern,

We are a Knox residents group, comprising residents in all Knox suburbs, of wide experience, and being committed to science-proven solutions.

We attach our submission to Knox City Council's Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029.

Please confirm that Knox has received, and can open and read, our submission.

If you have any questions, please contact us at [REDACTED]

Physical Post may be directed to Attn: Knox AdvoCats, [REDACTED]

Thank you,

Knox AdvoCats

Regarding paying cat fee every year for cats that are only indoors I find extreme. I wish to know why it is so high as we don't use parks, don't care about pets in the park, they can't come. Most cats domestic can live to over 20 years if indoor pets. So desexing, reuniting lost pets etc doesn't impact us.

Having said that I feel that having a cheaper desexing campaign during kitten season may help reduce the amount of cats and kittens being killed every year in pounds around the country.

I also believe that having more than 2 cats in a house big enough should also not be an issue. As some larger houses could easily accommodate extra cats.

Regards

[REDACTED]

<p>Hi. I missed your survey deadline on Dogs & Cats , but wish to contribute to the discussion. Particularly regarding the above areas. Due to the proximity to [REDACTED] pet cats roaming unattended are of great concern to me.</p> <p>Neighbouring property's and my own are regularly visited by others cats. Previously I have found the remains of native animals killed by cats.</p> <p>Over the years I have observed echidnas, possums, various bird species, native rodents, and the odd snake at our address. I am concerned that these animals are at risk of cat attacks.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>
<p>The current dog park was established during COVID time when outdoor activities were restricted. With the increase of residents and especially younger age families in Knox, dog park management should be enhanced to minimise any incidents.</p> <p>Since the establishment of the dog park, I've seen an increase of incidents of unleashed dogs and poos, and therefore my enjoyment of the reserve has been deprived to avoid being attacked by the dogs.</p> <p>Council should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Limit the unleashed dog daily time. -Issue a QR code to each dog and get each dog to wear the QR code in the case of attacks or missing dogs. -Have more presence near park and set up heavy penalties for non-compliance. -Making it very strict that dogs can only be unleashed within the fenced areas, NOT near the fenced areas, e.g. 5 metres from the gate.
<p>Rather than rely on residents trapping cats, the council should follow up sightings by looking at registrations of cats in that neighbourhood when they are reported and then checking in with the pet owners whose animals match the description. Expecting neighbours to trap the cats leads to additional responsibility for the cat on the person trapping it and puts the onus on the people who are not responsible for the pet. The non-owner is expected to trap the cat, be out of pocket to hire the trap as well as having to work to trap it. They also have to take responsibility for the welfare of the cat when that should not be theirs and may not be possible. It is morey relationships fracturing, the council should</p>
<p>Yes.</p> <p>I am a [REDACTED] of irresponsible dog owning neighbours and council complaint processes, with the last [REDACTED] being in Knox. I made a complaint in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] more around [REDACTED] years ago;</p> <p>1 - My [REDACTED] complaint has led to an improved outcome, so far. However the response times by council are too long. Something worse could easily have happened in the interim. I understand processes and such delays are not necessary and lead to poorer outcomes, for everyone, except perhaps the dog owner. This is not an issue with the individual officer. It needs to be addressed by leadership and it will be the process. Council organisations can be more difficult to turn around but it IS possible. And done properly, you not only have less queues, but a less unhappy and more healthy environment and for your residents.</p> <p>2 - Council's process feels to me geared towards deterring people from complaining. Demanding we go through the Dispute Settlement Centre first, means a wait of months. Have you ever read the online reviews of this service. I can now vouch for them not being an exaggeration.</p>

Then (if) you get through that, there is the “onerous” dog barking diary to contend with. I don’t know if you have ever tried to complete one? I have. Over months. And to be told that there can be no “summaries”. That it must note the start and finish time of every specific bark (along with where I was, what I was doing, how I was affected, what was the dog barking at, etc). When a dog is barking through the day and night. While the owners holiday overseas for weeks. Leaving their distressed dog alone and outside in the yard. While you are just trying to get some sleep. Is basically impossible. And clearly designed to “fob off” complainants. To deal with this I am now installing a security system where I can record the barking and with software, identify and summarise most of these details.

3 – Most dog owners are responsible. I do a lot of walking, running and riding around Knox. While from time to time I do still get rushed and even bailed up by an off the leash animal in a park, it is rare compared to 40+ years ago. I can’t say the same for neighbours and their barking dogs, which feels on the increase (I had none 13 years ago).

However, irresponsible dog owning neighbours seem to dominate everything with their noise. On each occasion I try to discuss the situation amicably first. Perhaps I just don’t do a very good job of that. But every time nothing improves, or at best, not for very long. Irresponsible dog owners always have no idea how to train their dog not to bark at everything it sees or hears, especially when they are not home. Nor do they accept that they even should. Then there’s their outrage that you would dare to insist they should. And it’s just too hard now, for them to be bothered with what happens when they’re not home (and sometimes even when they are). In all cases I find there is zero empathy for their neighbours. And to me this selfishness and ignorance seems to be on the rise. And of course it’s not restricted to dogs barking.

4 - Dog poo not being picked up is still an issue, especially when it regularly appears on my nature strip. It’s likely the irresponsible dog owners here again. But it is also older people who can’t accept it as their responsibility...particularly males. And young males are also well represented here (although I have an estranged youngish daughter who won’t “pick up”). However, the small amount of time for me to pick it up and put it in my compost bin is insignificant compared to listening to a loud and constantly barking dog night and day.

5 - Cats. In my street you wouldn’t know that there was a cat rule. It feels like 1970. However if I started complaining about cats too, there would be almost no neighbours left that I talk to. And cat fights, cat scats in the garden and even cat scratching’s on the bonnet of my car, are not even close to mind numbingly constantly barking dog. Although cats sitting on or behind a fence and teasing a dog is a problem. It would be a bad if the cats were killing small native birds...but the (native) noisy miners have long since driven all those away.

6 – Most people won’t complain to council about irresponsible dog ownership. Other neighbours will complain to me about it (and thank me for taking the action they won’t take). But some people will never report anything to authorities. Others are dog owners themselves and cannot be sure what happens when they are not home. And still others don’t want to make more trouble with a neighbour...and be the recipient of vendettas...and this is what happens...as I can attest. Once you have already spoken to a neighbour about their dog (and been ignored). They are always going to guess where an “anonymous” complaint to council came from. They always come and ask me...and I have to answer “yes”. Retributions against me include slander, abuse, vandalism and 2 false/malicious reports to Knox council. Where irresponsible dog owners weaponise council officers...a waste of our rates. I’ve lived with the bad blood of making complaints for ■■■ years now and it continues every day. I remain content with my decision and it’s consequences. It would be nice though, if Knox councils process was more responsive and equal for all parties...rather than putting all the pressure on the complainant...and the dog owner need only tell lies and do nothing. Perhaps technology will provide me with an easier and more effective way to collect and present diary evidence.

Dear Council Members,

I wanted to offer my feedback in addition to filling out the on-line form issued as it did not address the following.

Firstly, as a responsible dog owner, I find that the council of Knox has inadequate spaces for people to run their dogs off- lead. They really need a large fenced space with some smaller fenced areas contained within. [REDACTED] has [REDACTED] Park which is fantastic. It allows people to take their dogs who aren't friendly enough to be with other dogs or don't recall to have some responsible off- lead time. These spaces are secure and well appointed with taps for water and poo bag holders. The space in front of the Knox Obedience Club would be suitable.

People often have to use the sport ovals because they are fenced but I know the sporting groups don't always appreciate it. We need some additional places due the increase in town house or apartment living.

Secondly, I believe the supply of dog poo bags is seriously inadequate. As a private community duty, I have been placing bags on the fences at more than 5 ovals on a weekly basis. As an experiment, I find it interesting that it has reduced the amount of poo at the ovals and I notice because I usually pick it up. I like to keep the ovals clean so that we can continue to use these spaces. I think a small amount of dog owners give the rest a bad name. Some people have thanked me for putting up the bags stating that it has "saved" them. Others have been guilted into picking up as the bags are there. Either way I would like to see the council provide more bag holders like Bayside Council do with small rectangular bins to dispose of them responsibly. This way the sporting grounds will be preserved better. I believe these suggestions are important as the City of Knox continues to build new housing developments. We can work together to share the spaces and respect sport groups and dog owners.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]

Pets in the Park - Engagement Responses (Not Related to Question – What Does Your Pet Mean to You?)
Please make a community cat program. It is scientifically proven & saves kittens, wildlife & helps dogs keep out of pounds. Please follow Australian Pet Welfare Foundation scientific evidence which saves, cats wildlife, dogs & carers lives. Community Cat Program.
My cat loved being outside sunning itself. I don't agree with 24 hr lockdown. Dusk to dawn ok.
In the reserve should have dog poo bags in metal container(as other states have) The container can be sponsored
Splitting Knox dog park into 2 for small/large dogs

Have Your Say – Survey Comments (Key Phrases)

The current dog park was established during COVID time when outdoor activities were restricted. With the increase of residents and especially younger age families in Knox, dog park management should be enhanced to minimise any incidents.

Since the establishment of the dog park, I've seen an increase of incidents of unleashed dogs and poos, and therefore my enjoyment of the reserve has been deprived to avoid being attacked by the dogs.

Council should:

- Limit the unleashed dog daily time.
- Issue a QR code to each dog and get each dog to wear the QR code in the case of attacks or missing dogs.
- Have more presence near park and set up heavy penalties for non-compliance.
- Making it very strict that dogs can only be unleashed within the fenced areas, NOT near the fenced areas, e.g. 5 metres from the gate.

Yes.

I am a [REDACTED] of irresponsible dog owning neighbours and council complaint processes, with the last [REDACTED] years being in Knox. I made a complaint in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] more around [REDACTED] years ago; 1 - My [REDACTED] complaint has led to an improved outcome, so far. However the response times by council are too long. Something worse could easily have happened in the interim. I understand processes and such delays are not necessary and lead to poorer outcomes, for everyone except perhaps the dog owner. This is not an issue with the individual officer. It needs to be addressed by leadership and it will be the process. Council organisations can be more difficult to turn around but it IS possible. And done properly, you not only have less queues, but a less unhappy and more healthy environment and for your residents. 2 - Council's process feels to me geared towards deterring people from complaining. Demanding we go through the Dispute Settlement Centre first, means a wait of months. Have you ever read the online reviews of this service. I can now vouch for them not being an exaggeration. Then (if) you get through that, there is the "onerous" dog barking diary to contend with. I don't know if you have ever tried to complete one? I have. Over months. And to be told that there can be no "summaries". That it must note the start and finish time of every specific bark (along with where I was, what I was doing, how I was affected, what was the dog barking at, etc). When a dog is barking through the day and night. While the owners holiday overseas for weeks. Leaving their distressed dog alone and outside in the yard. While you are just trying to get some sleep. Is basically impossible. And clearly designed to "fob off" complainants. To deal with this I am now installing a security system where I can record the barking and with software, identify and summarise most of these details. 3 – Most dog owners are responsible. I do a lot of walking, running and riding around Knox. While from time to time I do still get rushed and even bailed up by an off the leash animal in a park, it is rare compared to 40+ years ago. I can't say the same for neighbours and their barking dogs, which feels on the increase (I had none [REDACTED] years ago). However, irresponsible dog owning neighbours seem to dominate everything with their noise. On each occasion I try to discuss the situation amicably first. Perhaps I just don't do a very good job of that. But every time nothing improves, or at best, not for very long. Irresponsible dog owners always have no idea how to train their dog not to bark at everything it sees or hears, especially when they are not home. Nor do they accept that they even should. Then there's their outrage that you would dare to insist they should. And it's just too hard now, for them to be bothered with what happens when they're not home (and sometimes even when they are). In all cases I find there is zero empathy for their neighbours. And to me this selfishness and ignorance seems to be on the rise. And of course it's not restricted to dogs barking. 4 - Dog pooh not being picked up is still an issue, especially when it regularly appears on my nature strip. It's likely the irresponsible dog owners here

again. But it is also older people who can't accept it as their responsibility...particularly males. And young males are also well represented here (although I have an estranged youngish daughter who won't "pick up"). However, the small amount of time for me to pick it up and put it in my compost bin is insignificant compared to listening to a loud and constantly barking dog night and day. 5 - Cats. In my street you wouldn't know that there was a cat rule. It feels like 1970. However if I started complaining about cats too, there would be almost no neighbours left that I talk to. And cat fights, cat scats in the garden and even cat scratching's on the bonnet of my car, are not even close to mind numbingly constantly barking dog. Although cats sitting on or behind a fence and teasing a dog is a problem. It would be a bad if the cats were killing small native birds...but the (native) noisy miners have long since driven all those away. 6 – Most people won't complain to council about irresponsible dog ownership. Other neighbours will complain to me about it (and thank me for taking the action they won't take). But some people will never report anything to authorities. Others are dog owners themselves and cannot be sure what happens when they are not home. And still others don't want to make more trouble with a neighbour...and be the recipient of vendettas...and this is what happens...as I can attest. Once you have already spoken to a neighbour about their dog (and been ignored). They are always going to guess where an "anonymous" complaint to council came from. They always come and ask me...and I have to answer "yes". Retributions against me include slander, abuse, vandalism and 2 false/malicious reports to Knox council. Where irresponsible dog owners weaponise council officers...a waste of our rates. I've lived with the bad blood of making complaints for ■ years now and it continues every day. I remain content with my decision and its consequences. It would be nice though, if Knox councils process was more responsive and equal for all parties...rather than putting all the pressure on the complainant...and the dog owner need only tell lies and do nothing. Perhaps technology will provide me with an easier and more effective way to collect and present diary evidence.

Please don't take away our open off leash areas, just because a few people might be doing the wrong thing.

More education on keeping cats indoors for their safety and controlling dogs when off lead not letting them rush other dogs.

Rather than rely on residents trapping cats, the council should follow up sightings by looking at registrations of cats in that neighbourhood when they are reported and then checking in with the pet owners whose animals match the description. Expecting neighbours to trap the cats leads to additional responsibility for the cat on the person trapping it and puts the onus on the people who are not responsible for the pet. The non-owner is expected to trap the cat, be out of pocket to hire the trap as well as having to work to trap it. They also have to take responsibility for the welfare of the cat when that should not be theirs and may not be possible. It is more relationships fracturing, the council should

I would like stronger action on barking/nuisance dogs. A persistent barking complaint was not met with much action from the Council.

Since moving, there are dogs in our area which bark at all hours which is not acceptable.

I have also experienced being chased by dogs at my local sports ground (not off-leash area) and getting nipped on the leg by a border collie.

I find that owners all over Knox are slack with cleaning up poo after their dogs and there is evidence of this on footpaths, in playgrounds, parks, reserves, and sports fields.

Knox Park, with its Obedience Club and Dog Park attracts a lot of dogs, and the surrounding area can be a 'minefield' due to the mess around. This is awful for the passers-by and the children and sportspeople who use the facility.

My partner and I fell in love with a neighbour's cat that left its own property, and it is sad that it is against the rules if they leave the property. I understand the wildlife threat to have cats roaming free though. I love cats and seeing them out the front of properties and greeting them but I don't think there will be much of that anymore given the restrictions

There is a domestic cat stalking wildlife at the pond in [REDACTED] It has been reported multiple times and Council has done nothing about it. As a result each year the ducklings reduce from 5-6 to 0-2. Council offered me a cat trap yet it is in public space. Totally unsatisfactory.

More dog friendly spaces, fenced and open areas

End the Knox 24-hr cat curfew. Implement a Community Cat Program. Video on Community Cat Program: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQbK3R36Xjg>
<https://petwelfare.org.au/community-cat-programs>
Rethinking Urban Cat Management—Limitations and Unintended Consequences of Traditional Cat Management: <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/15/7/1005>
Urban Cat Management in Australia - Evidence-based Strategies for Success: <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/15/8/1083>
24-hr cat curfews have failed in Casey and Yarra Ranges. Download - Key Issues Mandated Cat Containment: <https://petwelfare.org.au/position-statements/cat-containment>
<https://framerusercontent.com/assets/kl6AZmco2gL9MtgHEVyOAFZCXbM.pdf>
'Australian shelters and pounds kill 50,000 mostly healthy cats and kittens in a year. There's a way to prevent this pointless killing':
<https://theconversation.com/australian-shelters-and-pounds-kill-50-000-mostly-healthy-cats-and-kittens-in-a-year-theres-a-way-to-prevent-this-pointless-killing-201947>
Stray and Owner-Relinquished Cats in Australia—Estimation of Numbers Entering Municipal Pounds, Shelters and Rescue Groups and Their Outcomes: <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/13/11/1771>
Impacts of a Local Government Funded Free Cat Sterilization Program for Owned and Semi-owned Cats: <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/14/11/1615>
Community Cat Program saved Banyule \$1million over eight years.
Domestic urban cats are not 'feral': <https://petwelfare.org.au/position-statements/cat-definitions>
Cats and Wildlife. Download - Issues to Consider About Cats and Urban Wildlife
<https://petwelfare.org.au/position-statements/domestic-cats>

More designated dog off leash areas.

Provision of dog poo bags and bins like other councils

more signage along blind creek please about keeping dogs on leash, including in the water. There has been a number of times when walking one of my dogs, that a dog has run up to us from the creek area or along the tracks and the owner has not been proactive in calling them back. It makes me feel unsafe as I have been attacked by a dog in the past. I have had to stop walking my other dog (reactive rescue dog) because of other off leash dogs. I know how to handle him and what his needs are but when other owners let their dogs run up to us and say "they are friendly" when my dog is clearly not comfortable and escalating is frustrating. An [REDACTED] was rushed a few months back while walking her small dog by a dog off leash in the [REDACTED] reserve (back paddock near [REDACTED] and she was shaking and distressed after. It isn't good enough. More patrols are needed to ensure the community is safe. Also walking dogs is becoming more dangerous on the bike track due to motorbikes/ dirt bikes and electric scooters being used, often at high speeds and including through underpasses and blind corners, they have been

a number of times me and my dog have almost been hit and have had to move to the side to avoid collisions.

I use the bike track everyday and have done so for more than 20 years and it is a shame to see some of the behaviours, at times I have had second thoughts about walking particular parts or not bringing my dog etc due to off leashes dogs. [REDACTED] Reserve is another area which dogs tend to be off leashes and when you are coming up through the alleyway, it isn't good to have the dogs run up to you. I didn't know how to report these occurrences to council or what council could do to make the issue better which is why I haven't said anything until now...

Why are the fees so high I get nothing for the fees

I've not seen any animals being a nuisance in Knox (except maybe some magpies). I actually feel the rules might be too strict, as it's sad not seeing neighbours' cats or dogs in the community more. I miss living in an area where the neighbours' cat could wander over to say hi

Knox AdvoCats submission to Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029

April 2025
[REDACTED]

Community Cat Programs - 'One Welfare'

Community Cat Programs 'One Welfare' approach recognizes the interconnectedness of animal welfare, human well-being, and their social and physical environments. Community Cat Programs are scientifically-proven, effective cat control. Banyule's Community Cat Program saved approximately one-million dollars over eight years. Jennifer Cotterell, Animal Management Officer, implemented and ran Banyule's Community Cat Program until she retired.

Urban Cat Management in Australia - Evidence-Based Strategies for Success. pages 9-10

'Cat-related calls to Banyule Council decreased in the target area by 51% and citywide by 36%. Savings associated with reduced cat-related calls to council, and the reduction in time spent by AMOs addressing complaints, estimated at A\$290 per call, was approximately A\$137,170 over the 8 years of the program. Further savings to council emanated from reduced costs associated with charges from the contracted shelter (A\$303,490). The total estimated savings over eight years were A\$440,660. The cost to council for sterilizations and microchipping amounted to A\$77,490 for the 8 years.

Similar or greater decreases in cat-related calls to councils in NSW and Queensland over two to three years were reported following implementation of similar programs. The flow-on effects of these programs include significant benefits to the contracted shelter, due to reduced cat intake. Given the estimated cost for each admitted cat of at least A\$400 and in some cases over A\$1000 for housing, sterilization, microchipping, and miscellaneous veterinary care, it is estimated that the program in the City of Banyule saved the shelter contracted (CPS) approximately A\$619,942 over the eight years based on a cost of \$400/cat, less income paid by Banyule per cat (\$80/cat until 2017/18 and \$150/cat from 2018/2019). Over the eight years of the program, total savings to the local government and the contracted shelter were estimated to be closer to A\$1 million, which did not include the value of the social or environmental benefits.'

Additional flow-on, uncostered, savings would be community mental health and wellbeing.

Urban Cat Management in Australia—Evidence-Based Strategies for Success

<https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/15/8/1083>

(Banyule) Impacts of a Local Government Funded Free Cat Sterilization Program for Owned and Semi-owned Cats: <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/14/11/1615>

Community Cat Programs: <https://petwelfare.org.au/community-cat-programs>

Video, Getting to Zero: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQbK3R36Xjg>

Over a one-to-three-year period, the Community Cat Program yielded a 30-50% reduction in cat impoundments across targeted areas – numbers that continue to fall in successive months and years. With no new litters being born, the cat population declines,

- Fewer stray cats mean less wildlife predation.
- Reducing the number of stray cats in pounds and shelters frees up more resources to care for and rehome dogs.
- Job satisfaction and mental health of staff in pounds and shelters are positively impacted (due to reductions in unnecessary euthanasia)

Intensive targeted desexing Community Cat Programs are effectively used in Europe, and across the USA - which has revoked leash-laws/curfews, as being unenforceable without owners.

Curfews prevent Community Cat Programs

24-hr cat curfew costs Council and residents ten times more than a Community Cat Program. Curfews fail to save wildlife, rise the euthanasia of healthy animals, and rise the suicide-risk in shelter-workers higher than for Australian police and firefighters. 87percent of Knox's impounded cats have no owners - to contain, or to convict. Curfews are costly and ineffective; are a barrier to ownership, and raise the stray cat, homeless, population.

Curfews high fines particularly target renters, the disabled, and the elderly - older Knox residents have said as they can no longer walk dogs, that they adopted cats. Therapy cats are also owned by Knox children and for mental health.

24-hr cat curfews have failed in nearby City of Casey and Yarra Ranges Councils.

Bayside City Council, City of Greater Geelong, Mount Alexander Shire and Frankston City Council have rescinded 24-hr cat curfews. Stonnington and Boroondara do not have curfews. Merri-bek City Council and Hobsons Bay City Council rejected cat curfews, to focus on unowned cats.

Rethinking Urban Cat Management—Limitations and Unintended Consequences of Traditional Cat Management: <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/15/7/1005>

Download - Key Issues Mandated Cat Containment: <https://petwelfare.org.au/position-statements/cat-containment>

<https://framerusercontent.com/assets/kl6AZmco2gL9MtgHEVyoAFZCXbM.pdf>

Terminology, Training

Training for Animal Management Officers and Local Laws is essential to not degrade into endless trapping and killing, at great expense to both Council and Community. Current desexing aid fails to help the cats most in need. Community Cat Programs need to be run by CCP educated officers.

We ask for Knox Council to cease citing inaccurate, inflated estimates of wildlife predation and faulty data. <https://petwelfare.org.au/position-statements/domestic-cats> Download - Issues to Consider About Cats and Urban Wildlife <https://framerusercontent.com/assets/qF3mhYTVyyM1EguYBmdVySJuyT4.pdf>

We ask for Knox City Council managers, staff, and reports to cease using the false term of 'feral'. Domestic urban cats are not 'feral'. No 'feral' cats enter Australian Council pounds.

Misnaming enables hate-speech and threats of harm. Incorrect terminology incites, and places at risk. Calling 'feral' and 'pest' imperils lives, prevents being seen as a potential 'pet', and outlaws care. Felines have a long association with females, and feminine attributes, as canines do with males, and the masculine. To make lesser, to deprive, can aid and condone cruelty acts, as being undeserving to live. Damaging name-calling, and tropes, often precedes violence.

Cat definitions: <https://petwelfare.org.au/position-statements/cat-definitions>

Inequality

Knox dogs have an off-leash Order for hundreds of parks, reserves and sportsfields, along with three dedicated dog parks. Pet registration money also pays for the annual non-inclusive dogs' party 'Pets in the Park' - where cats are not safe, not seen, not heard. There are no cat parks, cats-welcome cafes to drink outside, and no annual cat party.

Registered Knox cats receive nothing back from registration paid. All registered cats are already desexed. Owners registered for if a cat got lost - which is redundant with the 24-hr curfew. Council also stated in 2021, that it would hide the identity of cat complainants.

Dog ownership in Knox hugely outnumbers cat ownership. The 24-hr cat curfew has removed wellness and health, as well as equality and trust, between neighbours. A Knox dog can walk on streets and in public places unleashed. Many dogs bound into private yards, and bail-up walkers on streets, with incidents going unreported as minority cat-owners are cowed by fear, and with less rights than the Knox dog-owner majority.

Cats have no visibility, no safety to be seen outside, and on streets. Council claims that 'cats can be walked on a leash' - which even the RSPCA 'does not recommend'. Indoor cats are more at risk of Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease - which can be fatal. Cats like to day-sleep and follow round the sun - which no enclosure can do. Fencing is expensive if there is even a yard, and not an option for renters. Being a different species has been devalued. Hidden cats are more at risk of cruelty acts.

Council-funding of groups

Could Council funding include a clause necessitating facts and inclusiveness and community health? Knox Council-funded groups could desist from calling cat-owners 'selfish and harmful'. Many cat-owners planted 'Gardens for Wildlife' and protect wildlife. Lessening untruths and requiring council-funded groups to have a better code of practice, would benefit minority groups, and animal carers.

Curfews place greater burdens on volunteer community rescuers - who raise funds for treatment, desexing, food, homes and ongoing care, without Council-funding. Curfews make Animal Management Officers into punitive police, the kitten-killers dealing out death and court-fines to the poorest. Community Cat Programs recast officers as welfare support for rescuers, for living animal solutions, which brings better mental health, and mutual respect.

What Future?

Promotion of Respect for Felines could include not intimating that cat-carers are 'crazy' 'childless' 'need mental help' for loving not 'the right pet', if they are not a 'real dog lover'.

Many Knox residents own both dogs and cats and want their cats to enjoy their lives equally. All responsible owners lock-in their cats at night - bedtime feeding should be encouraged. Curfews are a deterrent to ownership.

In 2020-2021, during the pandemic, there was no advertising that a 24-hr cat curfew was being considered. Council did not inform cat-owners, and residents learnt from public media only after 24-hrs was enacted. Those in support of night curfew were counted as being in support of any curfew. Knox Council Meetings were kept closed to the public. Letters did not receive answers. Councillors blocked residents' questions on Facebook. Complaints to Council were not addressed. When residents requested consultation on 24-hrs, costing less than \$10 per cat-owner, consultation was denied. For decades, cat-owners have paid registration money to Council and have received nothing back - not a say, not a voice, not consideration. Consultation, and transparency are vital, to not victimise minority groups.

If wildlife and human lives would be valued by Knox Council, it would be demonstrated in using science-proven solutions, and facts, instead of opinion and a political 'war on cats'.

Community Cat Programs bring communities together - saving many animal lives and costs and community health.

A better world would be where both felines, and females, could walk safely without fear, be seen on streets, and not experience hate-speech, threats of violence, of shooting, of having throats cut, being scared, trapped, and enduring lifetime-lockdown imprisoning and silencing.

If as much respect and value could be accorded to felines, and females, as is accorded to canines, and males. If Knox cats could publicly sun-bathe and socialise. If Knox could be a better place to live.

Community Cat Program's 'One Welfare' approach optimises the well-being of people, animals and their environment.

Can Knox end the 24-hr cat curfew?

Can Knox implement a Community Cat Program?

Knox AdvoCats

Community Cat Programs: <https://petwelfare.org.au/community-cat-programs>

Video: Emeritus Professor Jacquie Rand at Getting to Zero: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQbK3R36Xjg>

Urban Cat Management in Australia—Evidence-Based Strategies for Success

<https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/15/8/1083>

Rethinking Urban Cat Management—Limitations and Unintended Consequences of Traditional Cat Management: <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/15/7/1005>

Australian Pet Welfare Foundation on cat containment: <https://petwelfare.org.au/position-statements/cat-containment>

Community Cat Programs resources: <https://petwelfare.org.au/community-cat-resources>

Domestic cats and native wildlife: <https://petwelfare.org.au/position-statements/domestic-cats>

The Conversation: 'Australian shelters and pounds kill 50,000 mostly healthy cats and kittens in a year. There's a way to prevent this pointless killing': <https://theconversation.com/australian-shelters-and-pounds-kill-50-000-mostly-healthy-cats-and-kittens-in-a-year-theres-a-way-to-prevent-this-pointless-killing-201947>

Stray and Owner-Relinquished Cats in Australia—Estimation of Numbers Entering Municipal Pounds, Shelters and Rescue Groups and Their Outcomes: <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/13/11/1771>

Impacts of a Local Government Funded Free Cat Sterilization Program for Owned and Semi-owned Cats: <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/14/11/1615>

Australian Pet Welfare Foundation submission to NSW Inquiry 2025: <https://petwelfare.org.au/government-submissions/new-south-wales>

Australian Pet Welfare Foundation's 2024 report: <https://petwelfare.org.au/community-cat-programs>

<https://framerusercontent.com/assets/rRqw378T9rF0X5wnik14Bac6A4.pdf>

The Impact of Lethal, Enforcement-Centred Cat Management on Human Wellbeing: Exploring Lived Experiences of Cat Carers Affected by Cat Culling at the Port of Newcastle <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/13/2/271?fbclid=IwAR2GgLTaULJoaBhVuVsrPIG59S5dV54OhoPQexarznCH57fjzWuojhw3xs>

Cat Caring Behaviors and Ownership Status of Residents Enrolling a Cat in a Free Sterilization Program <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/14/20/3022>

A Situational Analysis of Attitudes toward Stray Cats and Preferences and Priorities for Their Management <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/14/20/2953>

Feline Farmhands: The Value of Working Cats to Australian Dairy Farmers—A Case for Tax Deductibility <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/15/6/800>

A Purr-Suasive Case for Sterilization: How Sterilizing Working Cats Supports Dairy Farmers' Wellbeing, Improves Animal Welfare, and Benefits the Environment <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/15/6/766>

Outcomes of a Community Cat Program Based on Sterilization of Owned, Semi-Owned and Unowned Cats in a Small Rural Town <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/14/21/3058>

Knox AdvoCats petitions:

<https://www.change.org/p/knox-advocats>

<https://www.change.org/p/knox-council-review-knox-council-s-plans-for-24hr-cat-curfew>

Nothing further thank you

I am concerned about dogs being off leash in reserves where there are often fledgling birds or ground dwelling species such as Buff-banded Rails. I would like to see patrols monitoring and issuing fines for dogs not on leads in these sensitive areas. Dogs roaming free can also damage creek banks where Spotted Pardalotes nest and also damage recent revegetation areas.

I think the biggest issue to me is the threat to native wildlife and ensuring there's good insensitive for being a responsible pet owner. As well as education around that.

Maintain current cat curfew. Cats should not be allowed outside properties at any time. Owners of cats found in bushland reserves should be fined. Unregistered cats should be disposed of.

If a barking dog is reported, as has been the case by a neighbour of ours regarding a dog that barks constantly in the unit opposite us, the council should see the issue is resolved. The dog continues to bark at all hours of the night and sometimes constantly during the day however the complaining neighbour has given up reporting the issue so we all now live with this noise pollution and sleepless nights.

Don't wind back cat curfew! Despite cats still roaming, I've noticed a decrease on my regular bike rides along bike tracks. It's good for cat welfare, good for neighbourhood harmony, good for wildlife.

I've never seen a local laws officer in a native reserve where dogs are off lead in on-lead areas or their owners constantly leaving poo. Because of this people act as if there's no rules and only conscientious people follow the rules. You don't need a big program, just start periodic education / enforcement visits to each reserve and park. The threat of random visits will make more people follow the rules.

Many people care about iconic wildlife (eg Eastern Rosellas) but don't know there's a higher risk their off lead dogs will kill one during breeding season. Can your social media / comms include education in Spring to remind people to keep dogs on lead and link it to protecting our wildlife?

I have a Gardens for Wildlife property and have worked hard to make it a great environment for the local wildlife to visit. Knox is fortunate to still have some local wildlife. However, nightly we capture cats and/or foxes on our security camera scoping our property and we have found dead and injured wildlife and it is very disappointing to us. Please protect our local wildlife and have local laws that are enforced; fining/prosecuting cat owners (and dog owners) who do not do the right thing and keep the animals on their property 24/7. Even a night curfew that means the cat should be inside overnight. Also do something about the amount of dog poo that is unsightly and not good for a healthy environment.

A focus on education and incentives to assist cat owners to do the right thing. Discounts on registration for cat owners with cat tunnels/cages. Free dog poo bags at parks or increased signage.

Enforce cat curfew

Rather than a hard to see registration tag perhaps a registration collar with dog or cat name and reg number printed on would be better. Everyone has to buy a collar anyway so no extra expense, can be small, medium, large etc. Would be more obvious if animal is registered or not.

Educating people - both pet owners and non pet owners. Understanding animal behaviours and that animals and people can share space safely.

Imposing new laws on old cats is challenging and in some cases unachievable by wonders to maintain cats the way the new laws suggest. In addition in some cases, it's traumatic for the cat. I agree that the new laws have benefits and protect wildlife and this is very important, however a suggestion would be to impose those new laws to new cat owners so that this environment is adopted without causing trauma due to such significant change of environment to older cats. You could argue that between increased levels of monitoring of unregistered pets, patrolling for stray and orphaned animals along with pet ownership education this might generate a similar outcome overall.

As a resident who is encouraging native wildlife to my backyard I am concerned with cats roaming at night which I generally see on late night walks in my area.

More education about dog training. Dogs owners let their dogs off lead then spend all their time calling them back when they run up to greet every person and other dog around. They don't have control of their dogs.

Many people think because their dog is friendly it is ok but is not. Some friendly golden retrievers are very big and strong and can unintentionally knock people over. Many let their dogs off to wander away and poop, so they can ignore it and not pick up after their dog.

It would be great if the council would place poo bag stands at parks and reserves for dog owners to use in case they have run out or forgotten as they do in other councils

Recognition of training of dogs and different training facilities and discounts for responsible pet ownership
<p>Rangers should have shift times eg 6am -2pm</p> <p>Etc</p> <p>As multiple times a week I am rushed by someone's off lead dog that is not under effective control but there is nothing done about because rangers do not work at the times that people are often out with their dogs and people don't care enough for the safety of their own dogs let alone others.</p>
<p>Please DO NOT TAKE away EVER the 24 hour curfew of cats confined to THEIR property. I'm in council's Gardens for Wildlife, I have possums, birds, frogs, skinks and other creatures in our garden. I only witnessed last week a cat wandering down [REDACTED] then another in [REDACTED], have on occasions witnessed a cat on the bike path, in amongst the native shrubbery. As we have [REDACTED] dogs they, are inside of a night. I'd be very angry if we had cats on our property. Our property is "ours" and as a rate payer, I have every right to know who or what comes into our yard. My daughter lives in [REDACTED] council, they have a rogue cat, spray over the decking ruining the wood varnish and the furniture during the night, their dog inside. They are ready to get a cat trap. So, cat owners need to keep the cats at home. I'm sure there would be lots of complaints an uproar if dogs were able to wander freely, day & night and onto a Cat owner's property, heaven forbid. But it's okay for cats to be loose, to seek and destroy and be a nuisance!</p> <p>Cat curfew the best thing out, no more cat fights in the middle of the night. Like in the past</p>
<p>1. Knox Park on leash need to be split into 2. small dogs & large dogs.</p> <p>2. By laws officer should come a check sport club when clubs (including dog clubs) is having an event, for the club.</p> <p>The general public,/ Non competitors having their dogs off leash around on the grounds that we are using for our competition. Twice now i have asked people not to go into competition areas, but then I get a mouth full back saying its a public park. But would they do this to football, cricket, soft ball or soccer match. So why is it different? THE dog club is a SPORT club also.</p>
<p>I often see dogs in National park areas and in [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] which is deeply disappointing.</p> <p>The barking in my local area [REDACTED] is out of control. I really wish the onus could be more on the owners to prove their dog isn't a nuisance rather than complainants proving that it is.</p>
Focus on stray cats that people need help with
<p>Since I moved to [REDACTED], I've really enjoyed the large oval nearby, so I often take my dogs there. Personally, I'm not a big fan of dog parks, because there are too many irresponsible dog owners who let their dogs run loose in fenced areas without paying attention to their behaviour. I believe educating dog owners is really important.</p> <p>Another issue I've noticed is that there doesn't seem to be a single public dog waste bag dispenser in the [REDACTED] area. I think this is one of the reasons why there's so much dog waste around my neighbourhood. In other suburbs, I've seen these dispensers placed at park entrances, and I honestly believe it makes a big difference.</p>

We are so sick of dogs having more rights in Knox than people and especially kids. I hope this survey isn't giving dogs even more rights. They are not permitted to be at local footy but every week someone brings their dog who ends up jumping up on kids. They are in every reserve as dogs have the right to be there and off lead, and the amount of times dogs come and jump up on me and my kids is endless. The owners 'oh sorry, she's very friendly' how about teaching these people to call their dogs back and not let them jump up on someone. I wouldn't allow my children to jump up on someone's leg and scratch and lick. I loved having a dog as a kid but living hear makes me resent dogs. I walk across a reserve everyday and just watch these dogs as they bound towards me whose owners are busy 'chatting' and not watching what their animal is doing. I'm actually sick of talking about it as nothing ever changes, we just give the dogs more and more and take away from the safety of the kids. We are sick of getting scratched and licked by other people's dogs.

Get dog owners to keep their dogs on leads everywhere they are meant to do this & make dog owners more accountable to be able to recall their dogs successfully.

It should be made an offense NOT to carry a receptacle for picking up dog faeces. Not carrying such indicates no intention to clean up after the dog.

Would love to see an open off leash area at Peregrine Reserve Pump Track or at least a fenced off leash area.

- Ensure that there are bins and poo bags provided at council reserves
- Provide bin/ bags at Liverpool Rd retarding basin. I have spoken to Melb Water about this and they said the carpark area was councils responsibility. When I forwarded their email to council, they wiped their hands of the matter SO people continue to dump their poo bags!
- while dog parks serve a purpose (ie keeping dogs secure) they are not ideal, because too many people using them do not actively keep an eye on their dogs, using them rather as a social meeting place, so I don't think council should go overboard with them. Maybe just ensure reserves/ ovals are fenced and have bins and water available.

There might be less nuisance dogs barking if cats weren't wandering around.
Also same problem with possums on the fences stirring up dogs but probably nothing can be done about that other than giving the dogs and their owners some understanding.

Pet litters are menace and we often see dead animals-possum,wombat,on shared paths

Provide dog poo bags and a bin at The Basin Retarding Basin and like areas to encourage people to pick up and dispose of poo.

The Basin Retarding Basin become and OFF leash area.

Cats be allowed outside providing they are not harming any wildlife

Off lead parks that are safe and suitable for small dogs only

Dogs should always be on a lead when in public spaces unless safely fenced off and designated as a dog friendly area.

Provide appropriate bins at reserves and parks for owners to dispose of dog poo bags.

Taking off leash dogs more seriously.

The straying of Cats especially also at night is quite a huge problem at [REDACTED]
Usually the dog owners here are very responsible however there is quite some dog poo on the sidewalks/nature strips.
It's a joke trying to report a barking dog, all the noting etc is a waste of time. Then I give up and put up with the problem.
Same with neighbours cats, disturbing us every night, visiting our property and doing their business, what a joke. I thought we had a cat curfew in place?
Proper information to residents regarding off-leash areas. In many situations I take my dog for walks, I see dogs off-leash where they're not supposed to.
Yes. As a responsible, registered cat owner in Knox, whose cat does not and has never been allowed to roam outside, I am appalled at the fees Knox are gouging from me for a purely administrative annual registration process. Knox do, and provide absolutely nothing for me as a cat owner, I am being used to subsidise the many local law breakers doing the wrong thing & costing Council, and it is disgusting. I've contemplating simply unregistering my animal - who is never outdoors so Council would never know - simply to avoid the rip off that is Knox Cat Registration fees, however I am too honest and thus my cat remains registered to this day. How Knox can improve the management of cats and dogs - actually do something in response to reports of freely roaming cats/dogs, instead of passing the buck at every opportunity and suggesting that responsible owners like myself hire a cattrap to do Council's job for them. I am not an employee of Council, so don't expect me to do your work for you free of charge, nor at a cost to me.
The use of sporting reserves for off leash areas has become a hazard. Irresponsible dog owners leave dog poo on the grounds for children and adults to inadvertently find during either cricket or football games. this is addition to the numerous holes that are dug by dogs on the same areas are a safety concern that needs to be monitored
I would like stronger enforcement of dogs must be on leash in residential areas. My dog has been attacked in the neighbourhood a number of times and too often I see people with dogs off lead that have aggressive reputations (pitbulls, rottweillers, etc.). I am scared to walk my dog in our streets because these dogs are off lead. Please enforce NO OFF LEAD walking in residential areas.
Education on how train a dog
My biggest issue is with cats. We have pet budgies which used to stay under our patio, now at night we have to bring them inside. We live in the [REDACTED] and there are always cats roaming/hunting. We get them setting off our security cameras during the night because they're entering our property. There isn't a day that goes by without seeing several different cats roaming free. Why should I have to put up with someone else's cat on my property. It is infuriating. Cat owners do not seem to care. And, they don't care about wildlife either if they do not contain their cats.
Tired of dogs off leash when they have no control
Ban extendible leads. These dogs are not under control
Charge pro-rata registration rates based on the amount of time remaining until April instead of the full fee if you register in Feb/March. You're a bunch of thieves.
My dog has only been attacked once and it was in a fenced in off leash area. She has never had an issue in unfenced larger areas as she and i know we can move away if needed. I've never been back to a fenced in area since

I often see cats outside properties when walking around, it's unclear if the owners don't know or don't care about the rules
More poo bags and bins in parks
<p>I'm so glad we have this survey as my wife and myself were planning to give feedback to the Knox Council. We live in [REDACTED] and in our vicinity, we do have at least 3 cats that visit our property every day or 2, in the front yard, backyard or under the house (we are on stumps.) We have identified 2 that belong to neighbours but are unsure who owns the 3rd one. Just last week, we cat fighting noises in the night and the next morning, we saw a dead possum in our front yard. Later that morning, we spotted a cat picking at the remains of the possum. We promptly cleaned up and discarded the bloody mess. We also have had issues with cat poo and cat pee. It is especially annoying when it occurs around our vegetable patches in the backyard.</p> <p>I really hope our council will be able to address issues like this with 1) better education for cat owners, 2) harsher consequences to act as deterrents and 3) better support for non-pet home owners like ourselves.</p> <p>Thank you, [REDACTED], Knox</p>
I am very pleased with the cat laws.
Make sure people keep the cats on their property.
Constant reminder of an individual's responsibilities via both email and hard copy mail outs.
Maybe introduce dog friendly symbols painted on parks footpath just an idea or similar
More open off-leash areas would benefit the community - this would be great if this could include walking trails also.
Signs and fines to remind dog owners to pick up the dog poo. Facilities around like bags and bins to throw away dog poo.
Make all of Kings Park an offlead dog zone - everyone treats it as that anyway. More open offlead dog areas and offlead dog areas with interesting walks
Generally happy with how things are run in the area
I am a regular visitor to [REDACTED] There are many dog owners who use the park, and they are all responsible dog owners. I come from [REDACTED] and there are not many off-leash options nearby. I'd love if one of the sections of [REDACTED] could be reserved for off-leash dogs as we very often can't exercise them because there is SO much sport going on multiple ovals.
Remove the restrictions on cat movement. Most pet owners are responsible and no further management is required

Keep the 24hr cat curfew in place, for cat safety and wildlife safety.
Please keep the 24 hour curfew for cats. Prior to this rule, we always had cat poo in our garden, front and back. We still have cats roaming in our street and pooing in our garden.
after being told by Knox animal management that there is nothing they can do if a cat trespasses on my property ,that there is nothing the council can do about it according to the federal law!so all my efforts to get some relief and help are according to you the council,have been an utter waste of time and effort! Get the law changed! You introduced a cat curfew have 3 cats invading my property, so obviously it isn't working and the responsibility sits squarely on your shoulders!My only comments are, that fines should be realistic \$2500.00 for cat Killing wildlife or straying! second conviction, euthanized! Every day you get it wrong, wildlife is lost! [REDACTED]
I have owned 2 cats at separate times, both rescues. They have been loving, loyal companions. They both lived to 16 years old. I would rescue a cat now except for the need to keep the cat on my property 24 hours a day. I found the 12 hour curfew easy to follow. I strongly feel the night curfew should be reinstated. Cats in need of a home would find one more easily without owners needing to purchase a cat run or worry about letting their cat outside when their dog is let outside. I assume the number of cats being re-homed has decreased with this need to keep a cat on the property at all times. Please reconsider the 24 hour curfew.
As an owner whose cat is 100% indoors, I object to having to pay for council registration.
I want cats and dogs to be safe and I want owners to be more responsible.
Na
Need more fenced off leash parks. Templeton reserve is great but not fully fenced and there is always a sport activity happening. More parks dedicated to dogs would be great. More signage to indicate dogs can be off leash. Lots of mandarin speaking people don't understand dogs can be off leash so signage is needed
I am concerned about the land behind [REDACTED] a group gathers in the early evenings to chat there with their dogs- all are off leash. I have often had a group of dogs run to attack me and my dog. I also often find dog poo. School children play there the next morning. Equally at [REDACTED] there are some quite aggressive dogs off leash on the oval- owners fail to close the gates and dogs run to attack other dogs (a [REDACTED] recently ran towards my dog and myself walking outside the oval). There needs to be signs at [REDACTED] regarding dog restraining and signs at [REDACTED] regarding off leash behaviour.
Yes, to me people not picking up poop is the single most irresponsible thing that many dog owners don't do. You need a ranger on an unmarked car, watching people early in the morning. It's an absolute disgrace. In regards to designated off lead fenced parks - it's a place where out of control owners congregate with out of control dogs. Also where clueless people go to allow their big dog to bully small dogs, or their small dogs to be bullied; all while being glued to their mobile phones or talking to equally irresponsible owners and ignoring their animals.

<p>I have never, and will never, set foot in one.</p> <p>Even in an off lead park, dogs should have a reliable recall or they shouldn't be off lead.</p>
<p>Gog/cat poop in the area is a big issue as there are many owners who don't pick it up or if they do pick it up they leave the bag on the ground and not put it in the bin. Occasionally my dog has found some on the ground and almost gone to eat it.</p>
<p>There are some great areas for dogs in the Knox region. It's great to have water bowls and taps around. It would be handy to have poo bag stations and disposal areas at off lead parks and public spaces. We find that the users of King's Park are very respectful to the facility and it's great to have fenced areas to allow people to safely socialise and exercise their dogs.</p>
<p>Better enforcement of animal registration and further investigation of barking dogs that are disturbing the neighborhood at all hours of the day.</p>
<p>Cats roaming in wildlife reserves are a common problem - stalking wildlife. Very disappointed when the KCC were uninterested in doing anything about it at all</p>
<p>My biggest fear is having a barking dog living nearby. I have already had one that was a nuisance for 3 years, day and night until owners moved. Also very worried about dogs that rush up to me when I am out walking as I have osteoporosis so would not fare to well if knocked over.</p>
<p>I have often found the biggest issue is dogs showing signs of aggression towards my dog and other dogs. As someone who has had dogs my whole life I would say that people are not properly socialising their dogs and as such they are anxious and aggressive when being walked down the streets on leash. It is frustrating to see as a dog owner whose dog is generally uninterested in another dogs until that dog behaves poorly towards her. Where I live in [REDACTED] there are off leash spaces but not many (as far as I'm aware) dog parks. While I would not take my dog to one as she's old and a small breed, I do think having more dog parks in my area would encourage dog owners to socialise their dogs better.</p>
<p>I feel most pet owners are doing the right thing. I walk my dog always on leash and have little to no negative experiences with other pets or owners doing the same. I will no longer use the fenced off lead parks (dog park) after my dog was bitten there by another dog whose owner admitted it doesn't like dogs it doesn't know. I have no idea why this dog was taken to a dog park when this is the case but was unsure how to report it to council. I think leashed dogs should be allowed in all public places perhaps with the exception of fenced playgrounds.</p>
<p>I live off [REDACTED] so this is where I walk my dog. More rubbish bins for dog poo would be a good thing. For instance there are rubbish bins at [REDACTED] however not at the entrance to the park of [REDACTED] People are inherently lazy unfortunately so easy access is required. A rubbish bin over the other side of [REDACTED] would also be helpful.</p>
<p>The number of stray/wandering cats around the environmentally sensitive area of Stamford Park Wetlands, every single night, is deeply concerning.</p>
<p>Please educate all cat owners to keep all of their cats confined 24/7 either indoors or in an outdoor fully enclosed cat run. The free-ranging cats near us are regularly stalking, attacking and killing native birds. It is not our responsibility to hire/borrow a cat cage and bring cats to the Council. Perhaps hefty fines should apply for not providing cat enclosures; this question should be asked on cat registration and should be physically checked by Council staff at the home where the registered cat lives. Please look after Knox's native wildlife.</p>
<p>The biggest issue is dog poo everywhere. People are just not prepared to pick up poo. Large dogs leave large poos. We see at least 5-10 poos on our neighbourhood walk every day - some on the nature strip, some in front gardens and some even on the footpath. We see owners walking while looking at their phones and no clue what their dog is doing so the poor dog gets pulled along behind the owner while leaving a trail of poos on the footpath. Owners who walk their dogs without a leash</p>

<p>don't seem to know when their dogs are pooing because they continue walking even if the dog is walking behind them. And other owners just watch their dog poo then continue walking. Seems impossible to fix unless dogs DNA is recorded and poo DNA can be matched which doesn't seem practical. So frustrating. We have to check our shoes after every walk.</p>
<p>Make the process easier to report neighbors dogs that barking constantly which creates a noise nuisance. Post or email a compliance letter to all registered CAT owners - to keep their cats confined to their property- which is impossible without a cat run I think the council should change the regulations regarding . All cats should be confined inside a home with access to a cat run.</p>
<p>I feel the 24 confinement of cats to their own property is grossly excessive and unnecessary. I agree with them being kept in overnight from dusk til dawn. But this rule with cats being confined to their own properties is stopping families from getting their children a pet cat as it seems cruel to keep the cat caged up constantly. Not everyone is a dog person. And we feel cats need to get a fairer go by council to be allowed outside during the daytime.</p>
<p>I'm happy for fees to be increased to \$500 and for the good owners that don't have council interactions there should be a good behaviour reward of reimbursement of 80%. Those owners that have council interactions or further discussions on animal behaviour techniques can come out of the council registration fees.</p>
<p>I own a very large dog and keep her on lead while any other dog is around, full control. Owners with small dogs seem to think it is ok to have their dog off lead and try to interact with mine while on lead.</p>
<p>Expecting people to keep cats contained to their homes when they've historically been able to go outside is absurd, as is the fact cat owners are still expected to register their cats in this situation. Subsidising outdoor structures/fencing so that cat owners can comply with this punitive legislation would be helpful in terms of compliance. Similarly, subsidised/discounted desexing of cats and dogs would likely help with compliance in that regard, too, as would humane management of the feral pet population. Have a more balanced approach to Council's treatment and attitudes towards both cats and dogs, as it's definitely dog-biased.</p>
<p>overall the council do a great job with monitoring the thousands of cats & dogs in Knox.</p>
<p>I do not believe fenced off lead areas are a good idea. Many lazy people leave their dogs unattended while they chat. Much prefer to walk my dogs off lead in a park.</p>
<p>More bins, especially along Blind Creek Trail, and bag dispensers to encourage people to pick up their dogs' waste</p>
<p>Dangerous dog breeds are the greatest concern. Animals are being walked by young owners and are straining at the leash while owners are looking at phone or dogs not on a leash at all. Not muzzled - it should be compulsory and questions need to be raised as to why specific dogs should even be allowed</p>
<p>We share sports ovals with sporting clubs and most of us really try to do the right thing: well behaved dogs, not using the ovals when sports are scheduled, pick up poo.?It's a really important place for community engagement and for our dogs to have a good run around and socialise so they remain well behaved. I have found fenced in small dog parks are dangerous, with owners not really as responsible. Thank you.</p>
<p>N/A</p>
<p>I'm concerned about the number of dog owners who are seen walking their dog/s in the heat (which is very dangerous for many reasons) I'm unsure if it is due to a lack of knowledge or ignorance, but it causes me distress</p>
<p>Dog owners in our area seem to be able to keep their pets on their property, but cat owners seem to always let their cats roam the streets. Perhaps increase their registration if they don't keep cat on property.</p>

<p>I truly wish there was a fenced dog park that could be booked out for certain times (even if this came at a cost)</p> <p>It is a wonderful feeling to let your dog really chase after a ball but when you don't trust your dog's recall and if they have been reactive in the past as a responsible owner you just don't let your dog off lead.</p> <p>However if there was an option to hire out a fenced in area so that they could run with peace of mind it would be great.</p>
<p>Dog parks and off lead areas are in horrible states with poo everywhere and are unsafe to take my dog.</p>
<p>So many cats are wandering the streets of the basin day and night harming wildlife and leaving poo on my front lawn/driveway.</p>
<p>Do not allow owners to use sport ovals as off leash dog parks. Dogs have dug holes and owners do not pick up after them. Leading to kids stepping in dog poo when training / playing sport. Dogs off leash intimidating others using the space.</p>
<p>Large Reserves should not be dog on leash requirements</p>
<p>More fenced off lead dog areas and adding more bins to these areas to encourage people to clean up dog poo! I've seen some councils have attached dog poo bags to these bins which I think is a great idea!</p>
<p>Prevent dog use of sporting grounds. Innovative ways to manage animal waste. Zero tolerance for aggressive behaviour.</p>
<p>Cats should be allowed outside during the day, on owners property</p>
<p>I think the City of Knox is doing a fabulous job with the management of cats and dogs. The team who support all pet related issues have always been kind, courteous, understanding and helpful when I've needed them. Unfortunately I don't know how you can improve the irresponsible pet owners who either do the wrong thing or how think that they can do whatever they like because their dog is 'friendly'.</p> <p>Maybe reduced rates for pet owners who attend obedience or dog training classes beyond puppy school? Puppy school is great but further education is needed to understand that not all dogs want to be near or around other dogs.</p> <p>It's a hard one for you all. Wishing you all the best.</p>
<p>Try to work out how to get all dog owners to pick up the dog poo.</p>
<p>I feel that the community is a very dog friendly one! We are new-ish to the area and are still exploring the dog friendly facilities. But something we have noticed is a lack of education around appropriate cat care. We have neighbors that don't leave their cats indoors and don't want to or seem to understand that it's dangerous for the cat and for our native wildlife. While education on the matter is absolutely needed, I am wondering if more can be done when the owners do not abide other than a resident causing tension by setting up a cat trap</p>
<p>Dogs are often unleashed at parks and grounds where it's uncomfortable for us to bring our kids. Also have noticed many Hunter breed dogs on large. Even on creek walks a lot of owners just run along with the dogs unleashed. When I brought it to council's attention I saw no change in last 10 months. There is no signs or boards to clearly say the owners about keeping dogs unleashed and not bring in common public parks</p>
<p>I am very concerned about the lack of safe facilities for dog owners in Knox. Frankston, Berwick & Bayside all provide an off- leash dog park with enclosed areas within a large fenced off area. Knox do not! Even where the Knox Obedience Dog Club operates from there is No fencing at all. Next to them are two sporting ovals which are fenced. Some people are not able to let their dogs off leash near a road. I would like to see some dedicated dog parks in this area as apartments etc</p>

continue to increase. The facilities need to be improved for the safety of people and dogs. So many people don't actually understand that off leash dogs need to be under voice control. As a Dog Trainer I see this all the time. I run a business and try to educate people about this all the time. I believe there should be more information in public places or at least at the dog parks!
I frequent the [REDACTED] playground with my toddler and the number of dog owners who let their dogs run free in the playground on the way to the sports field is crazy. We experience this multiple times a week and the owners seem to have very little control over their pets. They always say their pet is friendly but that is besides the point. It would be great if they playground was fenced to avoid this and keep kids safe.
Provide dog waste bags and drinking fountains for dogs.
Subsidies to build cat enclosure
There needs to be a stricter and more robust process to report and punish owners who neglect their dogs, a large number of dogs in the area are left isolated for 8-9 hours a day and are distressed and barking. Becoming s problem for the entire neighborhood. The current process/ system in place does not do enough to prevent this
Strongly suggest having more bins available at or near pocket parks e.g. Biloo Park/Edgeware court playground so that pet walkers are encouraged to clean up after their pets. The MCH centre has bins, it might be a nice idea for one of them to be available for wider public use as well. Additionally, there are a few reactive/highly excitable/fearful dogs in the area who don't do well in dog parks but it seems such a shame that they can't have access to large (contained/fully fenced) open areas to stretch their legs. When redeveloping any park/playground/sporting net areas, it would be great if council would consider having a fully fenced small enclosure (like a single cricket pitch) that reactive dogs can have access to where they can train and run around in a safe environment. I understand the sporting clubs sometimes make contributions to the development of assets, however it seems a shame that none of the batting infrastructure, which is perfect for reactive dogs, is available publically (even on a booking system) for residents to book or use. Provision of safe, isolated spaces for fearful dogs would reduce attacks.
The majority of dog owners are responsible. The few who aren't most probably won't abide by additional council laws.
Provide insightful and helpful support materials to newly registered pet owners (and perhaps periodic thereafter). Untrained dogs are a nuisance to their owners and their community including trained dogs.
As a committee member of a sporting club within Knox, would like to see more signage available to sporting clubs about seeing dogs kept away from clubs as they often scare young children.
Police and patrol problem areas, BUT discreetly so your rangers can catch offenders who do not have their dogs on a leash. It is not acceptable to have a leash in your hand, the dog untethered. It is not acceptable to have a leash on the dog, but the dog roams freely NOT being restrained by their human. [REDACTED] of residents and interlopers walking through the estate think that because their is no main road, that their dog can be off leash. When people are confronted about their dog being off leash, their replies are unsatisfactory, 'he's friendly', ' he won't hurt you', 'he won't bite' - no one cares, tether your animal for it's own welfare. Please do something because residents in this area are a law unto themselves, and the issue is rife outside of standard business hours when they deem you will not be monitoring the problem. And it is a huge problem, just look at all the dog shit everywhere. A tethered dog would be noticed taking a dump, would it not?

I don't believe that dogs should be allowed in playgrounds as that is where children play. In Kings Park Upper Ferntree Gully specifically there is a kinder (Coonara) where the kids run out of the back gate and into the reserve and onto the park and they are greeted almost daily by off the leash dogs. I understand it is allowed but it doesn't bode well, dogs who are at the height of children's faces and running free there. Additionally, when we visit the Tim Neville Arobretum and are in the playground area there is often dogs on or off leads inside that park. Dogs near kids in playgrounds in my view do not mix and it scares the kids (and often the adults). I think they should be banned from being in/around playgrounds.
In Bayswater, fence off the area at the corner of Rodney and Susan Streets (adjacent to tennis courts), and make it a dog park. Then make it an offence to let dogs run on the oval at Guy Turner reserve and put signs up to that effect. Then both cricket and soccer players will not have to contend with dog poo on the grounds, and walkers will be able to safely enjoy the reserve.
More signage at parks stating rules.
Every day i see at least one cat wandering the streets. If my dog got out and was wandering the streets he would be sent to the nearest animal shelter/pound so why isnt the same happening for cats. Ill tell you why because they are mostly out late night early morning when council works have clocked off/havent clocked on
Curfews don't work and further alienate the semi-owners. You should be working with the community to become more responsible rather than enforcing curfews people can't comply with. I have an indoor cat but there are so many roaming cats in our neighbourhood out at all hours and I know they have loving owners who care for them but struggle to keep them indoors or to get them to return home if they do let them out. They need better support.
Do not increase the number of on leash areas
We need far more off leash areas for dogs. The ovals are constantly being taken up by sports training and games leaving no areas for people to walk their dogs.
Your 24/7 cat curfew was never supported by the numbers, which were skewed and deliberately misinterpreted.
More bins so no excuses for people to clean up after dogs
Pets are part of many families. Creating an environment which encourages responsible pet ownership with sufficient exercise for both pets and residents is highly desirable
The priority should be owner training and availability of spaces for dog training.
No
The rule to keep cats on property at all times should be removed as it is cruel and unnecessary for cats
Extra patrols would be great or, failing that, installation of cameras on sportsgrounds to catch repeat offenders whose dogs dig holes in the fields or who don't pick up after their dogs.
Having moved from Yarra Ranges to Knox council area I have noticed a much more positive approach to cat ownership in Knox Council. Cat owners appear to keen their cats indoors/ on their property much more than in Yarra Ranges. Responsible dog ownership however appears to be a problem. Whenever I walk around our beatiful waterways in Knox, I am so sad to see bags of dog poo that have been dropped or left there, many dogs off their leash with owners assurance that "they are friendly", only to have 2 in the last 6 months aggressively growl and nip at me.
Offer free registration for 100% indoor cats.
Why do cat owners have to pay so much for registration when they effectively get nothing for it? They can't leave the property.

<p>We have had cats and/or dogs for a long time and have a good record of responsible pet ownership. Our animals are loved and well cared for. While our older cat never leaves premises anyway, our younger one does and we were caught out after we missed registering him (he was a stray we rescued) and he escaped. We have since invested hundreds of dollars in cat proofing the property but I'm still paranoid he'll escape as he tries to sneak out the front door when anyone arrives/leaves. I've just spent \$168 on registering my animals and if they escape by accident, I wish council would punish us so harshly again. My cats have previously been attacked by a neighbour's cat so I can see the benefits of the rules, I just don't think the penalties need to be so severe if you can show you've tried to keep your animals contained.</p>
<p>Take dog attacks more seriously. My dog was the victim of a very serious attack by another dog, and I felt the incident was more or less shrugged off. I am still afraid of walking past the house where this dog lives.</p>
<p>We have a neighbour that constantly complains about dogs barking and it is not happening. People that are serial complainers without facts should be addressed</p>
<p>Providing discounted desexing/microchipping for cats to increase compliance</p>
<p>The introduction of the 24hour cat curfew was the most appalling decision they have made even though there was a significant opposition from residents to do so. The counsellors who voted for the curfew blindsided constituents and residents because they didn't even honour the 12 month night time curfew that was in place at the time. I have no confidence in Councils doing what is right, I see them only pushing their own interests and agenda. Would be nice to see this Council do the right thing and remove the 24hour curfew and fix the wrongs of the previous Councillors. The whole personal agenda of the previous Councillors who voted for the 24hour curfew has left a lot of residents and constituents feel let down and extremely hurt with how those Councillors dealt with the unprecedented correspondence by email and on Council's Facebook to not implement the curfew. Yes, we are angry!</p>
<p>More bins for poo disposal in reserves/parks either off or on lead areas. More pet friendly events.</p>
<p>Can dog be prohibited from entering/playing on a sports oval. Particularly during the season whether it be football or cricket. Parents are sick of picking up after someone else's dog so our kids can play safely</p>
<p>A suggestion please: If you could put the Same amount of effort you do n fear mongering about 'cats Always (which is not true) chase wildlife', into greatly reducing dog poop on sidewalks, in outdoor shopping areas (like Mountain Gate & others) & reminding people that Cats outside at night is a risk. They are Much more important & hyping residents up on cats always killing wildlife. And I just want to say that the death of a pigeon is Nothing compared to the fear I have seen of a dog off lead running up to a person who may or may not have a fear of dogs.</p>
<p>More off lead but not fenced dog play areas. Fences trap in the dogs and they cannot escape if another dog decides to growl/play rough</p>
<p>Why does it matter if people who complete this survey are LBGQ or Aboriginal..Stop the division. They are people, we are all human. Just stop asking these divisive questions please.</p>
<p>Let the cats out during the day and indoors at night</p>

<p>I'm not sure how this could be improve this. We are trying our best to make our garden a wildlife garden with Indigenous plants and careful management but we have regular cats visiting our garden and fighting beside our bedroom window. I believe they have pulled a birds nest down from one of our bushes. It was a wattle bird nest. I have no problem with cat ownership but I am unable to keep them out of my garden.</p>
<p>I am still waiting to hear from Knox council about an animal problem I reported a month ago</p>
<p>Better education on responsible pet ownership. Fining irresponsible pet owners more regularly. Maybe some kind of reward system for identifying responsible pet owners</p>
<p>Restricting cats, that have being used to have outdoor access, 24 hours a day is cruel. New cats or kittens brought into a home should be kept inside 24 hours a day, like mine are. But I believe existing family cats should should only be restricted to the home from dusk until dawn. I also believe no dog should be off lead ANYWHERE in a public place, unless in a fenced in dog park, then people enter that park at their own risk.</p>
<p>More fenced dog parks that are spacious and have separate areas for small & large dogs.</p>
<p>Most people in the community appear to look after their animals and all get along. Council should provide more bins in public spaces for dog pooh. So often you see people bag the pooh only to throw it under a bush, creating extra waste. The cat curfew should be reduced back to dark hrs only so that it can be more realistically managed and allow cats time to do instinctive things like roll in the grass, sniff & scent etc. We have invested significant money in multiple outdoor enclosures / spaces but it's not enough for their well-being and mental stimulation.</p>
<p>There are so many greyhounds in this area yet there is nowhere we can take them to let them be off leash. We pay registration each year and get nothing for it. Please set up a greyhound only, fenced, off leash area</p>
<p>I have experienced one major dog attack (my dog was punctured/injured and required emergency vet care) in [REDACTED] a few years ago. The "stray" dog was in a front yard on the other side of the road and crossed the road to attack my dog for no reason. I reported it to the council they couldn't do anything (unfortunately there was no collar, no way to identify the dog) and apparently didn't belong to the house it was in the front yard of at the time.</p> <p>A man in a car stopped to help us (thank goodness), removed the dog from mine and restrained the dog so we could get away (as I lived around the corner on [REDACTED] I'm not sure what he did after that.</p>
<p>There are some nasty dogs in the Knox area :(</p>
<p>Harsher penalties for residents who allow their pets to roam</p>
<p>Some way to manage the people with the very friendly dogs that they let walk around either on or off leash, going up to other dogs or people that may not want contact with them. Often these are smaller dogs and the owners think they can do no harm, however other dogs, kids or people can be afraid of them regardless, or just annoyed by them. And I'm sure if a bigger dog got defensive with their uncontrolled dog it would be the bigger dog that gets the blame.</p>
<p>Reduce registration fees for indoor cats. This may make some people keep their cats inside completely and reduce them causing issues or roaming. Provide far more dog poop bag stands and bins along trails and in the Liverpool Road retarding basin.</p>

Don't have a 24/7 cat curfew
<p>Council needs to go back to a dusk to dawn cat curfew, or not charge for registration.</p> <p>It's not fair that you pay for registration and then get charged to have your cat returned if it accidentally gets out.</p> <p>Kids leave back doors open, and cats are escape artists (not the owners fault)</p> <p>The elderly need pets for company, and i know of two elderly people whose cats have escaped through carers turning up.</p> <p>So many people are going to not pay cat registration anymore when there are no incentives for doing the right thing.</p>
Keep the cat curfew. My cat loves her enclosure And she is not bothering (killing) the wildlife.
I am aware we have the most relaxed off leash dog laws in the area - not sure on the data but if dogs need to be on leads then so be it
<p>Why are Animal Registrations going up when we do not even have rangers fining irresponsible pet owners who allow their dogs to roam around the streets off leash.</p> <p>Or cat owners who do not lock their cats up!</p>
accountability to the people that are not picking up after their dog.
I can see some of cats wandering around the court I am currently living in. I know their owners and we have a good neighbourhood relationship, so I feel embarrassed to report the issue and trap their cats. But cats are really dangerous to our natural animal especially for birds.
I
Only issues we have been affected by in past has been (a) dog poo on private premises (owner not properly monitoring pet), and (b) cats fence-jumping. Suggest advertising to increase awareness of pet ownership responsibilities and community wellbeing. Install bags/bins for disposal of dog poo at various walk locations.
The old cat curfew if dusk to dawn worked better especially for cats that were used to being out before the 24/7 curfew came in.
Advice on cat runs and how to keep cats happy when they can't roam. Advice for people who haven't had indoor cats before.
<p>I don't think cat owners who have indoor cats should have to pay pet registration.</p> <p>It's a waste of money when the cat doesn't venture outside. We are living in a cost of living crisis and to have to pay \$54 per cat when they are locked in a house in absolute disgrace.</p> <p>Dogs - yes if they go out of the property for walks or dog parks understandably but a cat that is inside the premises is ridiculous.</p> <p>What are we paying for???</p>
Off leash dogs need to be licenced to be off leash . Those who think their dogs are under control off leash are not always as under control as they think.
<p>Provide more bins at local parks and reserves for dog poo.</p> <p>Have more signage around about the rules on dogs, eg. if the area is on leash or off leash</p>
I don't believe cats should be imprisoned in there own home. registrations should be free an optional. or just something listed with the rates.

<p>Stop Knox's 24-hr cat curfew. Save \$1million with a Community Cat Program. Scientific evidence from The Australian Pet Welfare Foundation shows that cat curfews 'mandated containment' costs all residents ten times more, fails to save wildlife, rises stray populations and kittens, and rises the suicide-risk in shelter-workers higher than for Australian police and firefighters.</p> <p>Registered cats receive nothing in Knox - no cat parks, no parties in the park, no visibility. Residents registered for if a cat got lost - not for lifetime lockdown, and hurting health and wellbeing.</p> <p>24-hr curfew hurts renters, carers, and pets welfare, with impacts cats with greater risk of Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease.</p> <p>90percent of Victoria's impounded cats have no owners to contain them.</p> <p>Community Cat Programs: Emeritus Professor Jacquie Rand: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQbK3R36Xjg.</p> <p>Banyule saved \$1million over eight years. Impacts of a Local Government Funded Free Cat Sterilization Program for Owned and Semi-owned Cats: https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/14/11/1615</p> <p>MDPI peer-reviewed science: 'Urban Cat Management in Australia - Evidence-based Strategies for Success': 'Cat-related calls to Banyule Council decreased in the target area by 51% and citywide by 36%. Savings associated with reduced cat-related calls to council, and the reduction in time spent by AMOs addressing complaints, estimated at A\$290 per call, was approximately A\$137,170 over the 8 years of the program 14. Further savings to council emanated from reduced costs associated with charges from the contracted shelter (A\$303,490). The total estimated savings over eight years were A\$440,660 [14]. The cost to council for sterilizations and microchipping amounted to A\$77,490 for the 8 years. Similar or greater decreases in cat-related calls to councils in NSW and Queensland over 2 to three years were reported following implementation of similar programs [26,33]. Flow-on effects of these programs include significant benefits to the contracted shelter, due to reduced cat intake. Given the estimated cost for each admitted cat of at least A\$400 and in some cases over A\$1000 for housing, sterilization, microchipping, and miscellaneous veterinary care, it is estimated that the program in the city of Banyule saved the shelter contracted (CPS) approximately A\$619,942 over the eight years based on a cost of \$400/cat, less income paid by Banyule per cat (\$80/cat until 2017/18 and \$150/cat from 2018/2019). [14,50]. Over the eight years of the program, total savings to the local government and the contracted shelter were estimated to be closer to A\$1 million (50). 'Australian shelters and pounds kill 50,000 mostly healthy cats and kittens in a year. There's a way to prevent this pointless killing': https://theconversation.com/australian-shelters-and-pounds-kill-50-000-mostly-healthy-cats-and-kittens-in-a-year-theres-a-way-to-prevent-this-pointless-killing-201947 MDPI Animals: https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/13/11/1771</p> <p>Australian Pet Welfare Foundation submission to NSW Inquiry 2025: https://petwelfare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Inquiry-Management-of-cat-populations-in-NSW.22F.jr_-1.pdf</p>
The registration fee is too high in my opinion. I am a responsible pet owner and don't use any of the pet facilities/services provide by council. Older dogs should definitely get a discount as they may never leave their property, as do inside cats.
Do hose checks. Especially if reported. Should not be up to residents to catch cats
Dogs shld be on leads except in off lead parks. More should be done to fine owners who fail to pick up after their dogs
I am sick & tired hearing an aging cat who had freedom to roam around a property, greet his friends at front of driveway now being confined & not allowed to experience life as a cat anymore sit in his enclosure & cry/meow all day
No

<p>Harsher penalties for cats breaking curfew, more education in the damage that cats cause.</p> <p>Fines for not picking up dog poo, bins at parks and retarding basin for owners to dispose of dog poo</p>
<p>Some of us have been diligent in ensuring we comply with cats on property, but many others are allowing their cats to roam, which can cause issues</p>
<p>Neighbours on my street [REDACTED]</p> <p>On odd sides of street.</p> <p>Slack, disregard to cat's to be indoors!!</p> <p>From [REDACTED]</p> <p>See then in morning and evening times! Bird time.</p> <p>Useless to get cage.</p> <p>As I start work 7am, then having to call council to report, then wait and lose work time waiting.</p> <p>Useless.</p> <p>Need ranger to speak to neighbours (as I continued to do) but they don't care.</p> <p>FINE them!!!</p> <p>My cat - [REDACTED] Strictly indoors.</p> <p>If outside - in harness and leash and watched continually.</p>
<p>Access to poo bags in off leash dog parks</p>
<p>Put more bins arounds parks for poo bags to go into and trial poo bag dispensers</p>
<p>More opportunities for low cost desexing</p>
<p>Consequences for cats let to roam off properties.</p> <p>Incentives for desexing pets. Dogs should not be allowed off leash while walking, so many will still approach us, dog, kids. Some owners don't realise that not everyone likes dogs, big or small....</p>
<p>Poo bag dispensers in reserves/parks, and better more prominent signs that state applicable fines (the current ones are really ineffective) check the ones in Mount Gambier they are great.</p> <p>Patrol and random checks of dog registration and fines for dogs off lead (or defecating & not picking up) in streets or parks/reserves that have signs stating dog on leash only. Better signs and please fine people who do not comply! You need to patrol people will only comply if it causes them a problem if they don't! Reduced</p>

fees for dogs who are attending registered training organisations. Action complaints instead of making the complainant feel like THEY are the problem. I believe many owners walk their dogs first thing and let dog poo with cleaning up so they do not have an issue at home. We have a dog poo composter (available at bunnings) with special worms that aid in composting, how about council offering these at a reduced price. Educate people that it's not ok for our reserves and parks to have dogs' poo in them!

In the past I have asked for action on dogs not in control from the council and have been fobbed off.

Extension leads should be outlawed. Owners believe that the dogs are under control but are not. I was once nearly upended by an extension lead while riding on a recreation path as the owner was 4 metres on one side and the dog the same on the other. The owner had ear buds on and could hear nothing.

Please have more signs of areas where dogs should be on lead. So many people have their dogs off lead on walking tracks in parks where they are supposed to be on lead & they run up to my dog & I which can be frightening. I think there needs to be more council patrols in parks. I also believe knox council should have doggy poo bag rolls particularly at the dog parks so many other council provide poo bags in large parks it may help to keep them cleaner.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I refer to your request for input on your **DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN - 2025**. I don't have any pets myself at the moment but often look after three well behaved dogs owned by my three sons and their families. We did have a beautiful, very obedient mini Schnauzer a few years back so have experienced a dog as a much loved pet and family member. To be fair, I do not like cats. They are difficult to control and destroy our wildlife which I often observe.

My comments as input to your plan are based on my current experiences with both dogs and cats. They are as follows:

CATS

Contrary to the rules of owning a cat, as best I can count, there are 5 cats that roam my property on a daily and nightly basis. They growl, urinate, defecate, fight and fornicate on my property and there is very little I can do about it. The odour of their urine is at times quite powerful around the back of my house. In addition, I have noticed the central heating ducting under my house has been damaged by cats clawing their way up on top of the warm ducting, thereby tearing the aluminium ducting allowing heated air to escape under my house. The cost to repair this will be significant, a cost I shouldn't have to incur.

Clearly the owners allow their cats to roam freely in the neighbourhood or simply don't care. They also particularly don't care about other people's concerns and right to live in a cat free household environment.

I suspect the Council has little control over this and the owners.

My suggestion for dealing with this problem of cats being allowed to roam freely around the neighbourhood is as follows:

- Council makes available to residents traps to catch free roaming cats.
- Trapped cats be returned to the owners with a fine for breaching the rules of ownership,
- Three strikes and you're out! On the third occasion a cat is trapped, it be classified as Feral and be euthanized accordingly.
- All costs incurred along this journey are to be met by the cat owner.

DOGS

Two of my adjacent neighbours have dogs. Two other neighbours, one across the road and the other a further house away also have dogs. The two dogs across the road are relatively well behaved, we only hear them barking very occasionally.

Aside from the dogs over the road, the other dogs bark incessantly all day, they often fire each other up. The dog of most concern is my direct neighbours [REDACTED] who often can bark all day by itself. Watching it, it seems to bark at birds, anyone or any activity in the Court, clouds, any slight movement in my back yard. This gets their neighbours dogs fired up as well so my wife and I are faced with annoying barking **ALL DAY, MOST DAYS**. This has impacted on the now few occasions we try to entertain outside. We simply cannot and have now given up on this activity. **The question is,**

should we have to be prevented from outdoor activities at our own house as is the case now. Clearly we shouldn't.

My wife and I get really annoyed with the dog owners and their children marching off to work and school each day not realising that their dogs are causing a major nuisance while they are away. They also purchase dogs as family pets that are ill suited to a domestic environment. Kelpies are a classic example. They are better suited to a farm environment chasing sheep and cattle, not a domestic backyard where they are simply bored and there is nothing for them to burn off their energy.

To date, we haven't reported this to the Council as we have been hoping that the dogs' owners will train their dogs not to bark. Alas, after a long and annoying two years, our patience is now exhausted.

It's simply not fair for people in the neighbourhood to allow their dogs to bark incessantly impacting on others nearby. Somehow, the owners steel themselves against the noise created by their dogs or, again, simply don't care. I suspect both reasons are in play.

I am not sure what the answer is to controlling barking dogs. It's a major problem around my house which annoys and frustrates my wife and me on a daily basis.

Maybe as a starter, Council could organise dog training sessions targeted specifically at the control of barking. Attendance at these should be mandatory. Council could either charge for these or make them freely available. Any complaints from the community should lead to the relevant owner having to repeat attending training sessions. Neighbours could be requested to sign off on a dogs barking being under control.

There must also be a process where an annoying barking dog which cannot be trained to stop barking is removed from the neighbourhood. I'm not sure what this is or how it would work. Maybe something could be applied which is based on the number of complaints received over a given time window and maybe the number of training sessions attended which change nothing.

While I have been somewhat negative in my above comments, my wife and I often look after three dogs owned by our sons. They are lovely dogs and importantly, rarely bark. We don't have any problem with neighbours owning pets, be they cat or dog, providing those pets don't impact on anyone else. That's clearly not the case where we live.

I trust these comments are helpul.

April 2025

Community Cat Programs - 'One Welfare'

Community Cat Programs 'One Welfare' approach recognizes the interconnectedness of animal welfare, human well-being, and their social and physical environments. Community Cat Programs are scientifically-proven, effective cat control. Banyule's Community Cat Program saved approximately one-million dollars over eight years. Jennifer Cotterell, Animal Management Officer, implemented and ran Banyule's Community Cat Program until she retired.

Urban Cat Management in Australia - Evidence-Based Strategies for Success. pages 9-10
'Cat-related calls to Banyule Council decreased in the target area by 51% and citywide by 36%. Savings associated with reduced cat-related calls to council, and the reduction in time spent by AMOs addressing complaints, estimated at A\$290 per call, was approximately A\$137,170 over the 8 years of the program. Further savings to council emanated from reduced costs associated with charges from the contracted shelter (A\$303,490). The total estimated savings over eight years were A\$440,660. The cost to council for sterilizations and microchipping amounted to A\$77,490 for the 8 years.'

Similar or greater decreases in cat-related calls to councils in NSW and Queensland over two to three years were reported following implementation of similar programs. The flow-on effects of these programs include significant benefits to the contracted shelter, due to reduced cat intake. Given the estimated cost for each admitted cat of at least A\$400 and in some cases over A\$1000 for housing, sterilization, microchipping, and miscellaneous veterinary care, it is estimated that the program in the City of Banyule saved the shelter contracted (CPS) approximately A\$619,942 over the eight years based on a cost of \$400/cat, less income paid by Banyule per cat (\$80/cat until 2017/18 and \$150/cat from 2018/2019). Over the eight years of the program, total savings to the local government and the contracted shelter were estimated to be closer to A\$1 million, which did not include the value of the social or environmental benefits.'

Additional flow-on, uncoded, savings would be community mental health and wellbeing.

Urban Cat Management in Australia—Evidence-Based Strategies for Success

<https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/15/8/1083>

(Banyule) Impacts of a Local Government Funded Free Cat Sterilization Program for Owned and Semi-owned Cats: <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/14/11/1615>

Community Cat Programs: <https://petwelfare.org.au/community-cat-programs>

Video, Getting to Zero: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQbK3R36Xjg>

Over a one-to-three-year period, the Community Cat Program yielded a 30-50% reduction in cat impoundments across targeted areas – numbers that continue to fall in successive months and years. With no new litters being born, the cat population declines,

- Fewer stray cats mean less wildlife predation.
- Reducing the number of stray cats in pounds and shelters frees up more resources to care for and rehome dogs.
- Job satisfaction and mental health of staff in pounds and shelters are positively impacted (due to reductions in unnecessary euthanasia)

Intensive targeted desexing Community Cat Programs are effectively used in Europe, and across the USA - which has revoked leash-laws/curfews, as being unenforceable without owners.

Curfews prevent Community Cat Programs

24-hr cat curfew costs Council and residents ten times more than a Community Cat Program. Curfews fail to save wildlife, rise the euthanasia of healthy animals, and rise the suicide-risk in shelter-workers higher than for Australian police and firefighters. 87percent of Knox's impounded cats have no owners - to contain, or to convict. Curfews are costly and ineffective; are a barrier to ownership, and raise the stray cat, homeless, population.

Curfews high fines particularly target renters, the disabled, and the elderly - older Knox residents have said as they can no longer walk dogs, that they adopted cats. Therapy cats are also owned by Knox children and for mental health.

24-hr cat curfews have failed in nearby City of Casey and Yarra Ranges Councils. Bayside City Council, City of Greater Geelong, Mount Alexander Shire and Frankston City Council have rescinded 24-hr cat curfews. Stonnington and Boroondara do not have curfews. Merri-bek City Council and Hobsons Bay City Council rejected cat curfews, to focus on unowned cats.

Rethinking Urban Cat Management—Limitations and Unintended Consequences of Traditional Cat Management: <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/15/7/1005>

Download - *Key Issues Mandated Cat Containment:* <https://petwelfare.org.au/position-statements/cat-containment>

<https://framerusercontent.com/assets/kl6AZmco2gL9MtgHEVYOAFZCXbM.pdf>

Terminology, Training

Training for Animal Management Officers and Local Laws is essential to not degrade into endless trapping and killing, at great expense to both Council and Community. Current desexing aid fails to help the cats most in need. Community Cat Programs need to be run by CCP educated officers.

We ask for Knox Council to cease citing inaccurate, inflated estimates of wildlife predation and faulty data. <https://petwelfare.org.au/position-statements/domestic-cats> Download - *Issues to Consider About Cats and Urban Wildlife* <https://framerusercontent.com/assets/qF3mhYTVyyM1EguYBmdVvSJuyT4.pdf>

We ask for Knox City Council managers, staff, and reports to cease using the false term of 'feral'. Domestic urban cats are not 'feral'. No 'feral' cats enter Australian Council pounds.

Misnaming enables hate-speech and threats of harm. Incorrect terminology incites, and places at risk. Calling 'feral' and 'pest' imperils lives, prevents being seen as a potential 'pet', and outlaws care. Felines have a long association with females, and feminine attributes, as canines do with males, and the masculine. To make lesser, to deprive, can aid and condone cruelty acts, as being undeserving to live. Damaging name-calling, and tropes, often precedes violence. Cat definitions: <https://petwelfare.org.au/position-statements/cat-definitions>

Inequality

Knox dogs have an off-leash Order for hundreds of parks, reserves and sportsfields, along with three dedicated dog parks. Pet registration money also pays for the annual non-inclusive dogs' party '*Pets in the Park*' - where cats are not safe, not seen, not heard. There are no cat parks, cats-welcome cafes to drink outside, and no annual cat party.

Registered Knox cats receive nothing back from registration paid. All registered cats are already desexed. Owners registered for if a cat got lost - which is redundant with the 24-hr curfew. Council also stated in 2021, that it would hide the identity of cat complainants.

Dog ownership in Knox hugely outnumbers cat ownership. The 24-hr cat curfew has removed wellness and health, as well as equality and trust, between neighbours. A Knox dog can walk on streets and in public places unleashed. Many dogs bound into private yards, and bail-up walkers on streets, with incidents going unreported as minority cat-owners are cowed by fear, and with less rights than the Knox dog-owner majority.

Cats have no visibility, no safety to be seen outside, and on streets. Council claims that '*cats can be walked on a leash*' - which even the RSPCA '*does not recommend*'. Indoor cats are

more at risk of Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease - which can be fatal. Cats like to day-sleep and follow round the sun - which no enclosure can do. Fencing is expensive if there is even a yard, and not an option for renters. Being a different species has been devalued. Hidden cats are more at risk of cruelty acts.

Council-funding of groups

Could Council funding include a clause necessitating facts and inclusiveness and community health? Knox Council-funded groups could desist from calling cat-owners '*selfish and harmful*'. Many cat-owners planted '*Gardens for Wildlife*' and protect wildlife. Lessening untruths and requiring council-funded groups to have a better code of practice, would benefit minority groups, and animal carers.

Curfews place greater burdens on volunteer community rescuers - who raise funds for treatment, desexing, food, homes and ongoing care, without Council-funding. Curfews make Animal Management Officers into punitive police, the kitten-killers dealing out death and court-fines to the poorest. Community Cat Programs recast officers as welfare support for rescuers, for living animal solutions, which brings better mental health, and mutual respect.

What Future?

Promotion of Respect for Felines could include not intimating that cat-carers are '*crazy*' '*childless*' '*need mental help*' for loving not '*the right pet*', if they are not a '*real dog lover*'.

Many Knox residents own both dogs and cats and want their cats to enjoy their lives equally. All responsible owners lock-in their cats at night - bedtime feeding should be encouraged. Curfews are a deterrent to ownership.

In 2020-2021, during the pandemic, there was no advertising that a 24-hr cat curfew was being considered. Council did not inform cat-owners, and residents learnt from public media only after 24-hrs was enacted. Those in support of night curfew were counted as being in support of any curfew. Knox Council Meetings were kept closed to the public. Letters did not receive answers. Councillors blocked residents' questions on Facebook. Complaints to Council were not addressed. When residents requested consultation on 24-hrs, costing less than \$10 per cat-owner, consultation was denied. For decades, cat-owners have paid registration money to Council and have received nothing back - not a say, not a voice, not consideration. Consultation, and transparency are vital, to not victimise minority groups.

If wildlife and human lives would be valued by Knox Council, it would be demonstrated in using science-proven solutions, and facts, instead of opinion and a political 'war on cats'.

Community Cat Programs bring communities together - saving many animal lives and costs and community health.

A better world would be where both felines, and females, could walk safely without fear, be seen on streets, and not experience hate-speech, threats of violence, of shooting, of having throats cut, being scared, trapped, and enduring lifetime-lockdown imprisoning and silencing.

If as much respect and value could be accorded to felines, and females, as is accorded to canines, and males. If Knox cats could publicly sun-bathe and socialise. If Knox could be a better place to live.

Community Cat Program's '*One Welfare*' approach optimises the well-being of people, animals and their environment.

Can Knox end the 24-hr cat curfew?

Can Knox implement a Community Cat Program?

Knox AdvoCats

Community Cat Programs: <https://petwelfare.org.au/community-cat-programs>
Video: Emeritus Professor Jacque Rand at Getting to Zero: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQbK3R36Xjg>

Urban Cat Management in Australia—Evidence-Based Strategies for Success
<https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/15/8/1083>

Rethinking Urban Cat Management—Limitations and Unintended Consequences of Traditional Cat Management: <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/15/7/1005>

Australian Pet Welfare Foundation on cat containment: <https://petwelfare.org.au/position-statements/cat-containment>
Community Cat Programs resources: <https://petwelfare.org.au/community-cat-resources>

Domestic cats and native wildlife: <https://petwelfare.org.au/position-statements/domestic-cats>

The Conversation: 'Australian shelters and pounds kill 50,000 mostly healthy cats and kittens in a year. There's a way to prevent this pointless killing': <https://theconversation.com/australian-shelters-and-pounds-kill-50-000-mostly-healthy-cats-and-kittens-in-a-year-theres-a-way-to-prevent-this-pointless-killing-201947>

Stray and Owner-Relinquished Cats in Australia—Estimation of Numbers Entering Municipal Pounds, Shelters and Rescue Groups and Their Outcomes: <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/13/11/1771>

Impacts of a Local Government Funded Free Cat Sterilization Program for Owned and Semi-owned Cats: <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/14/11/1615>

Australian Pet Welfare Foundation submission to NSW Inquiry 2025: <https://petwelfare.org.au/government-submissions/new-south-wales>

Australian Pet Welfare Foundation's 2024 report: <https://petwelfare.org.au/community-cat-programs> <https://framerusercontent.com/assets/rRqw378T9rF0X5wnik14Bac6A4.pdf>

The Impact of Lethal, Enforcement-Centred Cat Management on Human Wellbeing: Exploring Lived Experiences of Cat Carers Affected by Cat Culling at the Port of Newcastle [https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/13/2/271?](https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/13/2/271?fbclid=IwAR2GgLTaULJoaBhVuVsrPIG59S5dV54OhoPQexarznCH57fjzWuojhW3xs)
[fbclid=IwAR2GgLTaULJoaBhVuVsrPIG59S5dV54OhoPQexarznCH57fjzWuojhW3xs](https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/13/2/271?fbclid=IwAR2GgLTaULJoaBhVuVsrPIG59S5dV54OhoPQexarznCH57fjzWuojhW3xs)

Cat Caring Behaviors and Ownership Status of Residents Enrolling a Cat in a Free Sterilization Program <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/14/20/3022>

A Situational Analysis of Attitudes toward Stray Cats and Preferences and Priorities for Their Management <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/14/20/2953>

Feline Farmhands: The Value of Working Cats to Australian Dairy Farmers—A Case for Tax Deductibility <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/15/6/800>

A Purr-Suasive Case for Sterilization: How Sterilizing Working Cats Supports Dairy Farmers' Wellbeing, Improves Animal Welfare, and Benefits the Environment
<https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/15/6/766>

Outcomes of a Community Cat Program Based on Sterilization of Owned, Semi-Owned and Unowned Cats in a Small Rural Town <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/14/21/3058>

Knox AdvoCats petitions:
<https://www.change.org/p/knox-advocats>
<https://www.change.org/p/knox-council-review-knox-council-s-plans-for-24hr-cat-curfew>

7 April 2025

Submission to Knox City 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. Our key focus areas include training Animal Management Officers (AMOs) in humane and effective practices, promoting responsible pet ownership through education and accessible veterinary care, and implementing targeted desexing programs to reduce euthanasia and overpopulation.

A core recommendation is the adoption of proactive, microtargeted desexing initiatives, as demonstrated in the city of Banyule. Over eight years, Banyule desexed 33 cats per 1,000 residents in disadvantaged suburbs. This led to a 66% reduction in impoundments, an **82% decrease in euthanasia**, and a **36% drop in cat-related complaints** city-wide. For a **council investment of AU \$77,490**, the program delivered **AU \$440,660 in savings**—AU \$137,170 from reduced cat-related calls and AU \$303,490 in lower animal shelter costs (Cotterell et al., 2024). Flow-on effects of these programs include significant benefits to the contracted shelter due to reduced cat intake. Given

the estimated cost per admitted cat of at least A\$400—and in some cases over A\$1000 for housing, sterilization, microchipping, and miscellaneous veterinary care—the program in Banyule saved the contracted shelter (CPS) **approximately A\$619,942** over the eight years (based on a cost of \$400/cat), even after accounting for the reduced income associated with fewer impounded cats from Banyule (\$80/cat until 2017/18 and \$150/cat from 2018–2021). **Total savings to local government and the shelter were estimated to be closer to A\$1 million** (Cotterell 2025 unpublished data), which does not include the value of the social or environmental benefits. This model not only improves animal outcomes but is also highly cost-effective and scalable.

In contrast, traditional approaches based on trapping and impoundment are expensive, ineffective, and contribute to staff distress and public dissatisfaction. Australian Pet Welfare Foundation (APWF) advocates for shifting toward supportive, community-based programs that remove financial and practical barriers to desexing, microchipping, and registration.

We also support legislative reform to prevent the unregulated giveaway of "free to good home" litters, which fuel overpopulation, and we urge councils to implement early desexing programs that remove the need for such rehoming. Broader policy changes are also needed to support pet-friendly rental laws, expand access to veterinary care for low-income households, and provide legal protections for community cats.

Crucially, APWF highlights the need for transparency and accountability. Councils must report on shelter intake and euthanasia, registration and desexing compliance, and enforcement of containment laws. However, **Knox City Council has not produced a Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) or any discussion paper for public consultation**, making it impossible to assess current strategies or compare updated statistics therefore this submission can only be based on the data provided in the 2017-2021 DAMP. This lack of transparency limits informed public feedback, hinders progress, and ultimately means it is assumed you will base your new plan on the highest survey response.

Training of Authorised Officers

Under Section 68(A)(2)(b) of the Domestic Animals Act, Knox City Council is required to ensure authorised officers receive appropriate training to effectively enforce animal management laws within the municipality. The Council meets this obligation by providing regular training for its Community Laws team in key areas such as animal handling, customer service, conflict resolution, investigations, and prosecutions. Officers are also multi-skilled, managing a broad range of legislative responsibilities beyond animal management, which enhances overall operational efficiency.

However, while the multi-skilled approach of officers is efficient, it may limit their ability to deeply specialise in the increasingly complex area of animal management, particularly when dealing with sensitive issues such as cruelty investigations or large-scale breeder enforcement. Additionally, the summary does not indicate how effectively these services are being delivered or whether sufficient

resources are allocated to meet the community's high expectations. Importantly, proactive and preventative approaches—such as microtargeted desexing, community outreach, and support for semi-owned cats—are not mentioned, despite being crucial strategies for reducing shelter intake and euthanasia. Integrating such approaches would better align with community priorities and enhance long-term welfare outcomes.

Programs to promote and encourage responsible ownership

Knox City Council has implemented a broad range of programs to promote responsible pet ownership, aligned with Section 68A(2)(c)(i) of the Domestic Animals Act. These include educational campaigns on registration, desexing, containment, and waste management, shared via Knox News, social media, and the Council website. Partnerships with Animal Aid have supported free microchipping, discounted desexing, and adoption initiatives like “Seniors for Seniors.”

Despite these efforts, survey results from the 2021–2025 plan highlight key gaps in public awareness and participation. Over 73% of residents were unaware of on- and off-leash rules, 24.5% had unregistered cats, and more than 21% reported their cats were not microchipped. These figures suggest a disconnect between current programs and community understanding. More targeted and consistent communication is needed—especially in areas with higher rates of semi-owned or unowned cats—to improve compliance and reduce shelter intake and euthanasia.

Programs to address over-population rates and high euthanasia rates

Community Cat Programs

The Australian Pet Welfare Foundation (APWF) strongly supports the expansion of microtargeted desexing programs like the one implemented in the city of Banyule (Cotterell et al., 2024). This evidence-based initiative demonstrates that meaningful reductions in cat impoundments, euthanasia, and nuisance complaints can be achieved **without introducing additional containment laws**.

Banyule's program was targeted at disadvantaged suburbs with high cat-related complaints and impoundments, and microtargeted within those areas to hotspot streets and properties. Over eight years, **33 cats per 1,000 residents** were desexed in target suburbs, reducing cat impoundments city-wide by **66%**, euthanasia by **82%**, and cat-related calls by **36%**. Notably, this was achieved **without any additional containment mandates**.

Crucially, this program was also **cost-effective**. For a modest investment of **AU \$77,490**, Banyule Council saved **AU \$440,660**—including **AU \$137,170** from reduced cat-related calls and **AU \$303,490** in lower shelter costs. This clearly shows that

investment in proactive desexing, rather than enforcement, delivers significant returns while improving animal and community welfare.

For success, these programs must be of adequate intensity—ideally desexing 30 cats per 1,000 residents in problem suburbs, or 10 per 1,000 if supported by intensive microtargeting. They must also be tailored to the specific needs of each area, especially where economic or housing barriers prevent compliance with containment. Building strong partnerships with local vets and welfare agencies is essential to expand access to free or low-cost desexing. Where local capacity is limited, councils should support high-volume desexing clinics and mobile vet services or fund transportation to clinics. For many low-income residents, especially those caring for multiple cats, even low-cost options remain unaffordable, and subsidised services are critical.

Programs must remove barriers such as requiring concession cards, as many in need fall outside eligibility. Vouchers alone are often ineffective if no affordable vet care is available. Importantly, **untargeted desexing campaigns may offer discounts to people who would have desexed their pets anyway, reducing overall impact.**

To maximise effectiveness, programs should prioritise **microtargeting** based on council data and include **positive, assistive engagement by AMOs**. Community Cat Programs prove that smart, community-driven desexing can transform outcomes—**reducing costs, euthanasia, and complaints without the need for punitive laws.**

Cat Containment

The Australian Pet Welfare Foundation (APWF) supports keeping cats indoors at night and, where possible, contained on their owner's property in a safe, enriching environment. However, APWF does **not support mandated cat containment laws**—such as night curfews or 24/7 confinement—as these have been shown to increase cat-related complaints, impoundments, and euthanasia. They also impose enforcement burdens and higher costs on councils without effectively reducing the number of free-roaming cats. For any containment strategy to succeed, it must be tied to **clear, measurable goals**—such as reducing nuisance complaints or wildlife predation—and tailored to the **source of the issue**. Data consistently show that the majority of free-roaming cats are semi-owned or unidentified, often concentrated in **disadvantaged areas**. In these communities, cat-related complaints are high, yet residents often lack the means to comply with containment laws.

Mandated containment becomes a **social justice issue** when residents live in rentals or social housing without suitable infrastructure—such as secure fencing, flyscreens, or air-conditioning. Enclosures can cost \$700–\$2000, and even cheaper DIY options like PVC pipe systems may be out of reach for people without tools or technical ability. Apartment dwellers often lack private outdoor space to build enclosures. Without subsidies or structural support, many simply **cannot comply**. Promoting low-

cost, practical strategies like **bedtime feeding** is far more achievable and effective. Feeding cats indoors at night and closing windows and doors can significantly reduce nuisance behaviour and wildlife predation, especially of nocturnal species such as squirrel gliders and phascogales. This method is free, simple, and encourages positive behaviour change without enforcement.

Mandated containment laws give a **false sense of resolution**. Most free-roaming cats have no identifiable owner, making enforcement nearly impossible. In cases where semi-owners are identified, they often lack the resources to comply. Issuing fines only places further burden on vulnerable residents and does not lead to actual containment. The **public perception** that containment mandates solve the free-roaming cat problem overlooks the root causes—poverty, lack of access to vet care, and unowned cats. These laws also contribute to staff distress by increasing euthanasia of healthy cats and reduce willingness of semi-owners to formally take in the cats they feed.

Victorian councils provide clear evidence of the failure of mandatory containment. In the City of Yarra Ranges, three years after introducing a 24/7 curfew, **cat complaints rose by 143%**, impoundments by 68%, and euthanasia by 18%, while the human population grew only 2% (Yarra Ranges 2021). In Casey, 20 years after containment laws began, impoundments were **296% higher** than baseline, and complaints continued to rise (Casey Council 2001 & 2021). Other councils, including Hobsons Bay and Hume City, have acknowledged that such laws are **unenforceable**. These outcomes reflect the impracticality of containment for people managing semi-owned or stray cats—particularly in low-income areas—and the need for more **realistic, community-based solutions**. APWF recommends a **more effective and humane approach**: promote bedtime feeding, support construction of simple cat enclosures, explore subsidies for disadvantaged residents, and invest in outreach-based desexing programs. These alternatives not only improve welfare outcomes but are fairer, more cost-effective, and more achievable for the entire community.

Mandatory Desexing

Uncontrolled cat breeding remains a major contributor to overpopulation in Knox, leading to poor welfare outcomes, increased community complaints, more impoundments, and higher euthanasia rates. While Knox has introduced compulsory desexing and offers some subsidised services, registration data suggests only a fraction of the total cat population is captured—particularly excluding semi-owned and unowned cats. These unregistered cats, often the subject of nuisance complaints, are typically undesexed and not formally owned, making enforcement and compliance impossible with no owner to enforce. Desexing mandates without accompanying support does little to address this issue. Many semi-owners or carers lack the financial means or practical ability to comply, and infringements issued for non-compliance—unless the cat is impounded—rarely result in the cat actually being

desexed. Instead, they can further strain community relationships and deepen disengagement, without improving outcomes for the animals.

Research and practical experience consistently show that the most effective way to address cat overpopulation is through **high-intensity, microtargeted desexing programs**, such as those implemented in Banyule. These programs focus on suburbs with high cat-related complaints and intake rates and engage directly with carers and semi-owners. They are more humane, cost-effective, and sustainable than enforcement-based models. For Knox to succeed, cat desexing programs must be **place-based** and eliminate financial and logistical barriers. Initiatives should provide free desexing, microchipping, and registration, specifically targeted to high-need areas and residents who are unlikely to comply without support. It is encouraging that Knox has accessed funding from Animal Welfare Victoria—this should be directed toward outreach in known “hot spots,” including the use of mobile desexing units.

Animal Management Officers (AMOs) are central to this effort. With their local knowledge, they are well-positioned to identify problem areas and support community engagement. Their time would be far better spent helping residents access desexing services than enforcing compliance through infringements that fail to result in outcomes for the cat. While subsidised desexing programs are well-intentioned, they often suffer from the “substitution effect”, where support is taken up by those who already intended to desex. This limits impact on overpopulation. In contrast, **free, targeted desexing** programs remove key barriers and encourage semi-owners to take full responsibility—desexing, microchipping, and registering the cats in their care.

This approach not only reduces unwanted litters and impoundments but also improves animal welfare and fosters stronger relationships between council officers and the community. In Knox, investing in targeted, free desexing in high-need suburbs would be a more equitable and effective solution, ensuring help reaches those who need it most while delivering long-term savings and better outcomes for animals and residents alike.

Registration and identification

Knox City Council’s registration and identification initiatives include several commendable elements that promote responsible pet ownership. Notably, offering **free initial registration for pets adopted through 84Y agreement rescues** is a positive, helping to support local shelters and reduce barriers to adoption. Additional incentives—such as **discounted fees for newly acquired pets, support for desexing via MAV/AVA vouchers, and no fines for the first impoundment of a registered pet**—encourage compliance and reflect a community-focused approach. The use of SMS reminders, online update options, annual audits, and efforts to reconcile data all show a clear commitment to improving the accuracy and reach of Council’s animal records. Public education, including planned infographics explaining how registration fees are used, also helps build trust and understanding among residents.

However, several gaps remain. While infringements may be issued for non-compliance, **these do not result in cats being desexed**, which is essential to tackling overpopulation. Without targeted outreach or support for semi-owners—who often care for unregistered and undesexed cats, many will remain non-compliant due to financial or housing barriers. Heavy reliance on follow-ups and fines risks alienating vulnerable residents, particularly when practical support (such as mobile desexing) is lacking. Deterrents like signage threatening fines may further discourage public engagement, rather than foster compliance. To be truly effective, Knox’s efforts must go beyond general incentives and **focus on microtargeted, community-based strategies** that support those least likely to comply without assistance.

Nuisance Cats

With all the mandates in place for cats, such as compulsory desexing, registration requirements, and containment orders, it may seem surprising to some that cat-related issues persist across the community. However, many of these policies primarily affect owned cats, while the majority of nuisance complaints and overpopulation challenges stem from semi-owned or unowned cats who fall outside traditional enforcement mechanisms. These cats are often fed or sheltered by well-meaning residents but remain undesexed, unregistered, and allowed to roam.

As a result, Councils like Knox still experience high levels of complaints and the ongoing need for cat trap loan services. This highlights the gap between regulation and real-world complexity, and reinforces the importance of proactive, supportive programs that engage with residents and address the root causes of stray and semi-owned cat populations.

Dog Nuisance

Knox City Council has taken several positive steps to address dog-related nuisance issues through a combination of education, enforcement, and practical support. One of the key achievements has been the shift to an **educative approach to barking dog complaints**, introduced in 2019, which has significantly reduced the number of complaints requiring enforcement. The use of updated educational materials, and direct communication with both dog owners and complainants has helped resolve most cases effectively and early. Additionally, the inclusion of barking dog education in the Council’s annual communication plan and the *Pets in the Park* event demonstrates a proactive intent to promote responsible pet ownership.

Efforts to reduce **dog litter** through enforcement of local laws and the proposal to distribute **Pooch Pouches** are also commendable, as they support both environmental hygiene and community expectations. Communication campaigns

encouraging secure containment—especially around storm events and fireworks—are practical and important for preventing incidents.

However, most responses remain **reactive** and focused on enforcement after a complaint or incident has occurred. While containment breaches and barking are investigated, there is limited emphasis on **preventative interventions**, such as early conversations with repeat offenders or broader community education in hotspot areas. Additionally, while dog attacks and wandering at large are linked, there's little indication that proactive containment support (e.g., fencing assistance or targeted education) is being offered to households regularly involved in complaints. Overall, while Knox has strong processes and shows a clear commitment to community safety, further investment in **prevention and early intervention** would improve long-term outcomes and reduce the burden on enforcement resources.

Dog attack

Knox City Council treats dog attacks and aggressive behaviour in public spaces as one of the highest priorities in its animal management strategy, given the significant risks they pose to public safety, other animals, and Animal Management Officers (AMOs). Over the past five years, there has been a noticeable increase in reported dog attacks and dog rushes, which Council attributes to both increased incidents and greater community awareness of how to report. While this upward trend is concerning, it reflects positively on the community's engagement and Council's responsiveness. Enforcement actions are robust, including immediate seizure of dogs involved in serious incidents, prosecution of severe cases in the Magistrates' Court, and use of court-ordered destruction or dangerous dog declarations where appropriate. Officers are also active in maintaining updated records, coordinating with neighbouring councils, and conducting random patrols in areas of concern.

However, there are limitations in the current approach. Enforcement is primarily reactive, often occurring only after an attack or complaint, with limited mention of preventative or educational interventions, especially for dogs found repeatedly wandering at large. While owners involved in serious incidents are advised of outcomes and legal implications, there is little evidence of structured conversations with dog owners aimed at preventing future incidents through improved containment, training, or behaviour management.

More could be done to promote early socialisation, obedience training, and responsible pet behaviour across the broader community. Furthermore, given that many attacks are linked to dogs not under effective control or inadequately confined, a stronger emphasis on proactive patrols and engagement in hotspot areas, as well as early intervention with at-risk owners, could help prevent attacks before they happen.

Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs

Knox City Council has implemented a structured and responsive approach to managing dangerous, menacing, and restricted breed dogs, as required under Section 68A(2)(c)(vii) of the Domestic Animals Act. All reports of such dogs are followed up promptly, with **annual inspections** conducted for all declared dogs to ensure continued compliance with legislation. However, there are some limitations to this approach. Breed identification, even with training, can be **subjective and controversial**, particularly when dealing with crossbreeds or dogs of mixed appearance. This may lead to disputes or community distrust in some cases. Furthermore, while the current strategy is effective in managing declared dogs already in the system, there is limited mention of **community education or prevention-focused strategies** to reduce dog aggression or encourage early behavioural interventions. A more balanced approach that includes education on responsible dog handling and behaviour, in addition to enforcement, may help reduce the number of dogs being declared as dangerous or menacing in the first place.

Domestic animal business

Knox City Council demonstrates a strong commitment to regulating Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs), with all 28 DABs (2021-2025 DAMP) in the municipality registered and subject to **initial and annual inspections** to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and Codes of Practice. A key strength is the **proactive and supportive approach**—Community Laws officers provide education and guidance to businesses, helping them meet their obligations, while still reserving enforcement for cases of repeated or serious non-compliance. Council also conducts follow-up investigations for all pets sold to Knox residents to ensure they are microchipped and registered and monitors illegal sales and backyard breeding.

However, a **potential limitation** is the reliance on annual inspections alone, which may not be sufficient to detect ongoing or emerging issues in high-risk or non-compliant businesses. The number of inspections and follow-ups may also be resource-intensive, especially if more businesses open in the future. While education is a clear focus, further public transparency about enforcement outcomes could improve community trust and accountability. Overall, the framework is comprehensive and demonstrates a balance between support and enforcement, though ongoing resourcing and monitoring will be key to maintaining high standards as the sector evolves.

Other matters- Definitions of Cats

The Australian Pet Welfare Foundation (APWF) supports the use of clear and evidence-based definitions for cats, as outlined in the RSPCA Australia's 2018 report *"Identifying best practice domestic cat management in Australia."* These definitions categorise cats as either:

- **Domestic** (owned, semi-owned, or unowned)



- **owned**, live in a domestic household, are usually named, have a form of identification, and depend on humans for their food.
- **semi-owned**, are directly dependent on humans and are intentionally fed by people who do not consider they own them. These cats are more abundant in disadvantaged areas and where food resources are available. They are sometimes called stray cats. Recent research documented strong emotional bonds of semi-owners with the cats they care for, and almost identical to the bonds reported by cat owners with their pet cats. These cats are also frequently named:
- **unowned**, are indirectly dependent on humans and receive food from people unintentionally, such as via food waste bins. They are more abundant in areas where food resources are available. These cats are of varying sociability and are sometimes called stray cats.
- **Feral**. Under these definitions, feral cats are entirely unconnected to humans, living and reproducing in remote environments such as forests, grasslands, or bushland, without receiving any intentional or unintentional food from people. In contrast, all cats encountered in urban environments—including those picked up by Knox City Council’s animal management team or brought to shelters—fall within the Domestic category.

It is important to note that the use of the term “**feral**” in council impound records or as a justification for euthanasia is misleading and inconsistent with best practice. True feral cats, by definition, are not found in urban areas and are not the subject of community complaints or shelter impoundments. This approach aligns with current practices at RSPCA Australia, which has removed the use of “feral” from their intake and euthanasia categories in recognition of the fact that shelters and councils generally do not encounter true feral cats (RSPCA Australia Report 2018).

Instead, cases previously categorised as feral are now classified under “behavior,” acknowledging that many cats react defensively when stressed and confined, even if they are not truly unsocialised.

For Knox, failing to adopt and apply these accurate definitions could hinder the success of proactive animal management strategies. Mislabelling frightened or stressed cats as feral can lead to unnecessary and premature euthanasia, undermining efforts to reduce euthanasia rates and build trust with the community. It can also obscure the real source of impoundments, which are predominantly semi-owned or unowned domestic cats. These are the very populations that should be included in proactive desexing and community outreach programs. Recognising all impounded cats as Domestic (whether owned, semi-owned, or unowned) allows for more humane, targeted, and effective interventions such as fostering, rehabilitation, or inclusion in CCP.

Knox City Council should formally remove the term “feral” from its animal management documentation and impound records. These definitions used by RSPCA Australia, cats encountered within Knox’s urban boundaries should be classified as Domestic (owned, semi-owned, or unowned). This will support more compassionate and effective strategies and ensure euthanasia decisions are based on accurate behavioural assessments over time, rather than premature judgments made under stress.

Conclusion

Knox City Council demonstrates a broad and holistic approach to animal management under Section 68A(2)(e) of the Domestic Animals Act, which allows for the review of other relevant matters in dog and cat management. One of the key strengths of the current plan is the recognition of the **positive role pet ownership plays in supporting community health and wellbeing**, particularly for mental health and social connection. The proposed *Pet Companionship Program* targeting socially isolated older people is a strong, preventative public health measure that also encourages responsible pet ownership and is in line with a “One Welfare” framework, which recognises the interconnectedness of people, pets and the environment. Additionally, the Council’s clear messaging and public education through community events like *Pets in the Park*, social media, and its website further supports its goal of promoting a responsible and pet-friendly community.

The Council is also taking **important steps in animal welfare**, particularly in its response to cruelty and neglect cases. Officers are authorised under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and work closely with the RSPCA, handling an increasing number of welfare cases locally. This growing responsibility demonstrates councils commitment to animal wellbeing and highlights its ability to respond swiftly to serious incidents. Its proactive role in emergency planning and participation in regional animal welfare training programs further ensures that both animals and community members are supported during times of crisis. The development and maintenance of emergency animal welfare plans, aligned with state frameworks, is another strength that reflects thorough planning and preparedness.

However, some gaps remain. With introducing mandates such as **compulsory cat desexing and cat curfews**, these measures target owned animals, while many challenges stem from semi-owned or unowned cats, who often fall outside the reach of regulation. Without targeted outreach or support programs to engage cat carers, mandates alone will not reduce cat-related issues.

Additionally, while councils' enforcement and complaint investigation mechanisms are robust, the plan could benefit from expanding more **proactive strategies**, particularly in areas such as desexing accessibility, microtargeted community education, and support for residents managing nuisance cats.

However, to truly reduce nuisance complaints, overpopulation, and welfare issues, the plan would benefit from more **place-based, proactive programs** that target gaps in compliance and support disadvantaged residents in meaningful ways.

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Best wishes,

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Background

Knox City Council is currently undertaking a review of its Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP), with the existing 2021–2025 Plan set to expire in December 2025. As part of this review, Council is developing a new four-year Plan in accordance with the requirements of the Domestic Animals Act 1994. The DAMP sets the strategic direction for the management of cats and dogs within the municipality and plays a key role in promoting community safety, animal welfare, and responsible pet ownership.

Community consultation is an essential part of this process, and Council has invited input from key stakeholders, including Animal Aid, to ensure the new Plan reflects a broad range of insights and expertise.

Council is particularly seeking input on strategies to:

- **Promote responsible pet ownership,**
- **Minimise the risk of dog attacks,**
- **Reduce nuisance issues caused by dogs and cats,**
- **Increase rates of pet registration and identification,**
- **Address issues of overpopulation and euthanasia,**
- **Improve the control of dogs in public spaces.**

Animal Aid welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of the new DAMP, and the following recommendations have been prepared to support the Council's objectives and enhance the wellbeing of both animals and the wider community in Knox.

Three-Stage Surrender Process and Early Intervention Framework

Linked to Key Objectives -

- Promote responsible pet ownership,
- Reduce nuisance issues caused by dogs and cats,
- Address issues of overpopulation and euthanasia.

To better manage incoming animal surrenders and support both the community and shelter capacity, we propose a structured three-stage surrender process, coordinated in partnership with Knox City Council. Under Section 33A of the Domestic Animals Act 1994, councils are required to receive surrendered animals; however, the legislation does not specify a timeframe for admission. This provides scope to implement a triage system that slows the surrender process in appropriate cases, allowing for early intervention and more thoughtful outcomes for both people and their pets.

Stage One begins with the initial inquiry—contact is made with Council, who then liaise directly with Animal Aid to log the surrender request. This is followed by Stage Two, where the owner completes a behavioural and health questionnaire to assess the animal's current situation and the urgency of the surrender, unless otherwise qualifies as an emergency for immediate admission. Finally, Stage Three involves admission into care. This approach ensures that those in emotional distress or crisis—who may later regret their decision—are offered support before surrender occurs. It also allows time for intervention strategies, such as providing temporary access to food, parasite control, veterinary treatment, or behavioural support. These simple but meaningful responses can help people keep their pets during difficult periods, reducing unnecessary surrenders and allowing Animal Aid to prioritise

emergency cases or Tier One admissions. This structured and compassionate process ultimately supports better welfare outcomes for animals and more sustainable shelter operations.

Recent studies support the effectiveness of triage systems in animal shelters. For example, Hurley (2022) discusses the evolving role of triage and appointment-based admission, noting that such systems can improve service, care, and outcomes in shelters by reducing euthanasia rates and enhancing animal welfare. Implementing a triage-based surrender process would help ensure that only those animals whose circumstances warrant immediate surrender are admitted, while others are provided the necessary resources to stay with their owners.

Reducing Reclaim Fees for Registered Pets and Addressing Financial Barriers

Linked to Key Objectives -

- Promote responsible pet ownership,
- Increase rates of pet registration and identification.

Research shows that registered pets have higher reclaim rates compared to unregistered pets, as owners are more likely to reclaim pets they have officially registered. In a study by Bradshaw et al. (2016), it was found that pets with microchips or other forms of registration were significantly more likely to be reunited with their owners, largely due to the increased likelihood of owners being contacted when an animal is found. This highlights the critical role of pet registration in reunification efforts.

Considering the current cost of living pressures, one way to encourage reclaiming of registered pets and reduce the barriers to doing so is to offer free reclaim for registered pets within 24 hours of impoundment. This approach removes a financial obstacle for pet owners and provides an incentive to keep their pets registered, especially during economically challenging times. Furthermore, a sliding scale reclaim fee—where the cost increases per day after the initial 24-hour window—could serve as an effective motivator for pet owners to reclaim their animals sooner. Research from the American Humane Association (2019) found that structured reclaim fees, particularly when tied to the length of time an animal spends in the shelter, can encourage faster reunification.

Additionally, a study by Faunalytics (2020) found that offering free reclaim for registered pets within a specified timeframe—such as 24 hours—has been shown to reduce shelter strain and increase the chances of pets being reunited with their owners. This strategy is particularly beneficial in the context of high impound rates, as it helps to reduce overcrowding and promotes a more efficient use of shelter resources.

Enhancing Field Reunification Efforts through After-Hours Collections

Linked to Key Objectives -

- Reduce nuisance issues caused by dogs and cats,
- Improve the control of dogs in public spaces.

While the council currently has a procedure in place for directly reuniting lost pets in the field, expanding this approach to include the after-hours Collections Team could further improve reunification rates. Training this team to recognise and act on opportunities for direct reunification of registered animals in

the field would not only increase the chances of pets being returned to their owners without entering the shelter system but also help alleviate the strain on shelter resources during non-business hours.

Studies have shown that quick, field-based reunification—especially within the first few hours of an animal being lost—dramatically increases the likelihood of a successful return. According to the American Humane Association (2019), immediate reunification is vital in reducing the number of animals that are impounded and later surrendered. By allowing the Collections Team to engage in direct reunification efforts, particularly with registered pets, the council could effectively prevent unnecessary shelter intake, reducing the burden on shelter staff and improving the welfare of animals. Empowering the after-hours team would also build a stronger link between animal control and the local community, creating a sense of trust and responsiveness that reassures pet owners that their animals are a priority.

Additionally, giving the Collections Team this some authority to reunite registered animals is consistent with modern animal management strategies, which encourage field-based interventions to reduce shelter intake and enhance the welfare of both animals and owners. Direct reunification efforts, combined with the immediate identification of registered pets, can make a significant difference, especially when timing is critical in the process of reuniting pets with their families.

The Long-Term Benefits of Free First-Year Pet Registration

Linked to Key Objectives -

- Promote responsible pet ownership,
- Increase rates of pet registration and identification.

Expanding the initiative to offer free pet registration for both cats and dogs in their first year, regardless of where the pet was obtained, would be a positive step towards increasing pet registration and promoting responsible pet ownership. Currently, many councils, including Knox City, offer free registration for cats adopted from shelters or pounds within the first 30 days, but extending this benefit to include both cats and dogs—irrespective of their source—would help eliminate financial barriers that may prevent owners from registering their pets. Offering this incentive could significantly increase the number of pets registered, improving the chances of lost pets being reunited with their owners and promoting community responsibility in pet care. Additionally, it would encourage early registration, which is vital for identification purposes and reduces the strain on shelters and animal control services.

From the council's perspective, although offering free registration in the first year may represent a short-term loss in revenue, this initiative offers long-term benefits. By having more pets registered early, the council ensures these animals remain on record, enabling future invoicing for registration fees as pets age. Research by Bradshaw et al. (2016) and McManus & Ward (2018) indicates that early registration significantly increases the likelihood of pets remaining on record for the duration of their lives, ensuring consistent revenue streams for the council while also fostering a culture of responsible pet ownership. Over the course of the pet's lifetime, this approach would lead to improved animal management and more efficient reunification processes. Moreover, by increasing the number of registered pets, councils can support both reunification efforts and better long-term animal welfare, making it a worthwhile investment in both community relations and operational efficiency.

Partnering with Professional Dog Trainers to Promote Responsible Pet Ownership and Reduce Dog Attacks

Linked to Key Objectives -

- Promote responsible pet ownership,
- Minimise the risk of dog attacks,
- Reduce nuisance issues caused by dogs and cats,
- Improve the control of dogs in public spaces.

Partnering with a professional and credible pet training team to conduct regular, free dog training sessions in the City of Knox would significantly enhance responsible pet ownership and help reduce dog attacks. Research indicates that community-based training programs foster positive behaviours in dogs and promote socialisation, which are crucial for preventing aggression. Evidence suggests that early and consistent training can decrease problematic behaviours such as aggression, destructive chewing, and noise fear. A study by Dwyer, Bennett, and Coleman (2004) found that behavioural training programs in the community were effective in preventing behavioural issues that might lead to relinquishment or shelter admission. The study revealed that dogs who underwent consistent behavioural training with their owners were less likely to exhibit the types of aggression use or destructive behaviours that typically result in rehoming or euthanasia.

Implementing free training sessions would also align with the National Canine Research Council's Responsible Pet Ownership Model, which emphasises the importance of education and community collaboration in fostering responsible pet ownership. By providing accessible training opportunities, Knox City Council can empower dog owners with the knowledge and skills needed to manage their pets effectively, leading to a safer community for both humans and animals.

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Mark Menze, CEO

& Shelby Thorn, Business Support Partner

April 2025

Knox Active Aging Advisory Committee – Thursday 1 May 2025

- Off leash areas clarify leash controls for the community, issue around dogs off leash on footpaths
- Training of dogs and owners
- Hate to see Council change leash controls and take away areas from the community
- Not enough waste bags or bins available in open spaces, people put dog poo bags in other peoples bins
- Dog poo, hard for elderly when they have to clean up other peoples dog waste on their property and naturestrips
- Support to victims of attacks
- Awareness for people who have dogs approach them/how to read behaviour, how to separate attacks when they occur
- Fear of being knocked over by dogs as senior
- Hard for elderly owners when they are sick and need to go places, supports available?
- Elderly person if they can no longer look after pets, what is the surrender process, how can this process be more known about?
- New animal registrations – provide guide for dogs and cats, information packs to be included
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Knox Youth Advisory Committee – Wednesday 28 May 2025

For the Knox Youth Advisory Committee: split into break out groups to brainstorm on each theme and provide feedback, give ideas on what Council can do to improve our services for the community.

Break out groups topics of discussion – to be presented back at the end of the session

What ideas or actions would you like to see Council implement relating to this theme?

What impact do cats and dogs have on young people in Knox? And any ideas on further action Council can take in this space?

Any other thoughts and ideas that don't relate to your key theme? What is your groups top three issues or concerns relating to cats and dogs in Knox?

Feedback:

- What we want Council to implement?
 - More programs to educate pet owners.
 - More bins and bag dispenser.
 - Fines – People not picking up dog poop.
 - More dog parks.
 - A time to let cats roam around.
 - All pets to have a names collar to help locate missing pets easier.
 - Signage.
- Top 3 Issues:
 - Providing access to resources (bags / bins).

- People should take pride in their community space and keep it clean.
- Educate people on fines and enforce them harshly.
- Impact on young people?
 - Left dog waste impacts social areas like sporting ovals / outdoor seating.
 - Spread of diseases.
 - Less likely to pick up their own dog waste as others aren't.
 - Community not look after shared spaces can create distress (unrest) in the community.
 - Impacts emotional wellbeing as pets are seen as family / children more than, say, 20-30 years ago.
 - Council should take pet issues more seriously like children.
- Random Idea:
 - Dog social meet ups.
- 1. Education through advertising.
 - Advertising animal obedience classes (newsletter) and how to execute proper discipline.
 - Reminders of problems and fines with non-responsibility.
 - Booklet when receiving a pet on how to take care, and fines for non-responsible pet ownership.
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- 2. Mental health aspects – Usually positive.
 - Webinar of what to do in situations, eg: of when a dog approaches you (for non-animal owners)? or could be regular, or how to approach dogs,.
 - Dog walking groups.
 - Education through schooling.
 - Chore list for children carry / owning animals, how to videos.
 - QR codes in open spaces. – Could be part of some plan.
 - “Safety” places to go when you don't know what to do. – Could be part of some plan.

Dogs Off-Leash:

- Ideas:
 - Pet education for community: (1)
 - Practical workshops.
 - Animal behaviourist.
 - Recall, Command.
 - Signs on paths / consistent signage.
 - Suitable fauna in off-leash areas. (2)

- Burrs cause infection and pain – our current only dog park in Knox has caused many injuries.
 - Hazards – bad water, poisonous plants to dogs.
 - Pet friendly activities / equipment.
 - More engagement events to bring dog owners out and opportunities to learn.
- Impact:
 - Some people are scared of dogs or allergic. (3)
 - Bikes / prams / wheelchairs often targeted by dogs. (3)
 - Aim to promote better public etiquette around interaction in the public.
 - Young children not having enough control / strength of large dogs. (3)
- Other:
 - Not well sign posted / rules understood. (1)
 - Community isn't aware more spaces are off-leash – currently one “dog park” in Knox.
 - Pet theft happens to off-leash dogs and runaways – reasons registering / microchipping is important.
 - “My dogs friendly, don't worry!” doesn't mean the other is or that the dog will always react the same.

Cat Curfew:

- Must not enter another person's property versus must be confined / contained to the owner's property.
- Short courses to get Licencing – “Licencing” with registration – “Pet Permit” to guarantee responsible pet ownership.
 - Short courses to promote positive ownership for a “pet nuisance” or discounted registration to combat:
 - Animal cruelty.
 - Uncontained pets.
 - Waste and leash laws.
 - Nutrition and pet health.
 - Pets and life changes.
- Discounted registration if attending a Council “course”?
- Miseducation of Community:
 - Getting communing onboard.
 - Council run cat workshops – been done in the past?
 - Specific rules and working.
 - How to boost animal welfare (cost effectively and time poor)
 - Local wildlife threat.
- Issues:
 - Different policies in cats and dogs.
 - Cats must be confined vs. dogs can be off-leash.

- Cats are not allowed to be in yard “freely”.
- Pros:
 - Protects cats health.
 - Protects wildlife (particularly native wildlife).

Knox Disability Advisory Committee – Tuesday 3 June 2025

- It’s a struggle for people to keep their cats contained if already used to being outside
- Cat enclosures are very expensive, Council could help people and give incentive to cat owners to pay for it
- Disabled people need education on how to care for their animals and keep them safe
- Small openings of bins at parks, hard for disabled people to use
- Commlink offer service for dog walking, Council could promote this service to the community
- Bins available on walking trails – dog poo everywhere, wheelchair users having to use their lap as rubbish bins until a bin can be found
- Bag dispensers – community groups could build them and ensure that they only allow one bag to come out at a time to prevent vandalism
- When people register their pets, give information packs on local parks and how to access bags
- More signs in open spaces

Knox Environment Advisory Committee – Wednesday 11 June 2025

- Cats are menacing and rampant issues within Knox
- Cats roaming causes stress for cats that are kept inside and also has an impact on biodiversity
- Does Council have data on cats roaming? (Maybe Biodiversity, not Community Laws) – Council could look to install camera for wildlife in Lakewood Reserve
- Education on impact of cats on wildlife in biological significant areas, Kulunga Native Reserve cats have been seen wandering at night
- Council could look to implement cat facial recognition app, can take photo and send it through to Council to track bad offenders
- Dogs, don’t want to have to tolerate seeing them in shared spaces, not everyone likes them
- Bin placements- Council should installing more bins in open spaces

Knox Multicultural Advisory Committee – Tuesday 17 June 2025

- Issue of owners not picking up after their pets
- Education for dogs off leash, ensure people feel safe to use open spaces

- Education around dog barking, owners to be considerate of neighbours when their dogs are barking
- Lack of knowledge from cultural background/language barrier for pet owners, Council could look to create translated materials and signs
- Council could create partnerships with neighborhood centers and run workshops with different cultural groups
- Council could create a dog flyer on how to look after animals
- Education to change community mindset to talk to neighbour instead of making complaints to council

Knox Early Years Advisory Committee – Thursday 26 June 2025

- Dogs run up to kids and steal their food out of their hands, families impacted by dogs off leash especially young children in fear stage - surprised owners are off leash
- Leash regulations are confusing- Council should make it all or nothing
- Clearly defined off leash areas with signage
- Children taken for excursions – risk management not considering dogs off leash – need access to correct information
- Council could provide additional education on responsible pet ownership and buying pets for home
- Programs for dog safety in kinder and schools being made more widely available, the current State Government programs are hard to access after covid
- Events – Council run education sessions about pet ownership -Other events where it could be run? - Stringy bark, Story time at libraries, maternal health network, pets in the park