

***Media release***

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**Take a ‘paws’ to have your say on Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan**

A community where people and pets can live together safely and in harmony is the goal of the Domestic Animal Management Plan, which is available for people to provide feedback on.

Surf Coast Shire Council endorsed the Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) 2017-21 at its January meeting. The plan will guide the way that Council works to influence behaviour and actions in the management of cats and dogs.

Mayor Cr David Bell invited people to submit feedback on the Draft DAMP, with the document available at [www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/DAMP](http://www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/DAMP).

“Community input has been a vital part of this plan from the start,” Cr Bell said.

“We know that our residents and visitors are the ones with first-hand experiences of dogs and cats on the Surf Coast, so their voice is invaluable.”

The draft plan was developed following a survey that welcomed more than 420 responses and a workshop with 32 participants. Important issues identified included dog behaviour, threats to wildlife and stock, enforcement, dog litter and responsible pet ownership.

“There are more than 6,600 registered dogs and cats in the Surf Coast. With this large population we see various issues and tensions, as we understand that not all people are animal lovers,” the Mayor said.

“The plan outlines how we can address these issues and tensions, and ensure that we are protecting the community and the environment.”

The Draft DAMP consists of 23 objectives and 57 actions that ultimately aim to foster a community where people can live with cats and dogs in harmony and safety.

“With our growing community, it’s crucial that we promote responsible pet ownership and respond to our obligations under the Domestic Animal Act, which the DAMP will help us achieve,” Cr Bell said.

Submissions on the Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2017-21 will close at 4pm Thursday 1 March 2018. To have your say, visit [www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/DAMP](http://www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/DAMP).