



Moreland City Council

Domestic Animal Management Plan 2017–2021



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Domestic Animal Management Plan Legislation

Under Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (the Act), every Council must prepare a domestic animal management plan, as follows:

68A Councils to prepare domestic animal management plans

1. Every Council must, in consultation with the Secretary (of the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources) DEDJTR, prepare at four-year intervals a domestic animal management plan.
2. A domestic animal management plan prepared by a Council must—
 - a. set out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services provided by the Council in its municipal district are adequate to give effect to the requirements of this Act and the regulations; and
 - b. outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district; and
 - c. outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district—
 - i. to promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats; and
 - ii. to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation; and
 - iii. to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals; and
 - iv. to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats; and
 - d. provide for the review of existing orders made under this Act and local laws that relate to the Council's municipal district with a view to determining whether further orders or local laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats in the municipal district are desirable; and
 - e. provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary; and
 - f. provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.
3. Every Council must—
 - a. review its domestic animal management plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan; and
 - b. provide the Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan; and
 - c. publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.
- v. to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats; and
- vi. to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and
- vii. to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted-breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations; and

Executive summary

This Domestic Animal Management Plan (the Plan) has been prepared to guide Moreland City Council's management of dogs and cats for the period of 2017 – 2021.

The development of this plan is a requirement of the *Domestic Animal Management Act 1994* (the Act) which requires every council in Victoria to prepare a plan in accordance with the template provided.

The Plan was developed by Council's Amenity and Compliance Branch through consultation with relevant Moreland City Council staff, key external stakeholders and agencies, along with the Moreland community.

The Plan relates only to the keeping of dogs and cats. The Act does not address other animals.

Each key issue area has objectives and an action plan that details the new actions Council will undertake over the next four years in order to achieve its animal management goals.

The purpose of the Plan is to guide Council in its service to the community, increase the likelihood of animals being reunited with their owners and reduce the number of cats and dogs in shelters – potentially being euthanised. It will also assist Council to minimise the nuisance created by some dogs and cats.

The Plan continues to build on the substantial work undertaken by Council with the implementation of the 2013 – 2017 Plan. The objectives of the 2017 – 2021 Domestic Animal Management Plan are to:

- encourage responsible pet ownership
- respond to issues raised by the community about nuisance animals
- reduce nuisance caused by cats and dogs
- enforce legislation relating to animals
- educate the community on topics related to animal management
- increase registration of domestic cats and dogs
- ensure Animal Management Officers are appropriately trained
- promote effective management of cats and dogs
- identify dangerous, menacing and restricted-breed dogs in the municipality and ensure they are kept in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations
- minimise the risk of dog attacks
- address overpopulation.

Introduction

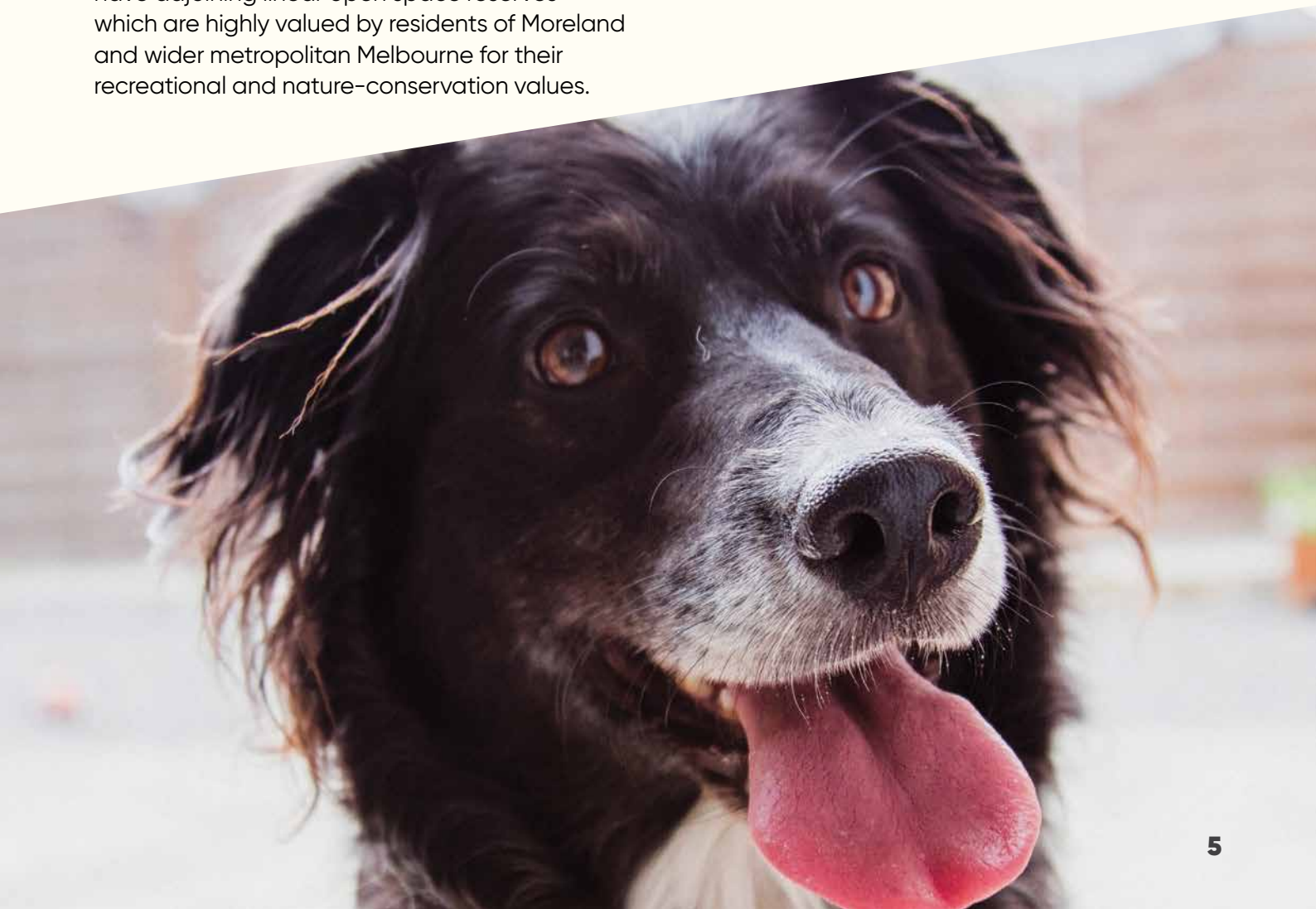
The City of Moreland lies between four and 14 kilometres north of central Melbourne.

It is bordered by the Moonee Ponds Creek to the west, Merri Creek to the east, Park Street to the south and the Western Ring Road to the north. Neighbouring Councils are City of Darebin, Moonee Valley City Council, Yarra City Council, Hume City Council and City of Melbourne. The City of Moreland includes the suburbs of Brunswick, Brunswick East, Brunswick West, Coburg, Coburg North, Fawkner, Glenroy, Gowanbrae, Hadfield, Oak Park, Pascoe Vale and Pascoe Vale South. Small sections of the suburbs of Fitzroy North and Tullamarine are also part of the City of Moreland.

Moreland has approximately 850 hectares of open space, comprising of over 177 parks and reserves. The Merri Creek and Moonee Ponds Creek, which form two of Moreland's boundaries, have adjoining linear open space reserves which are highly valued by residents of Moreland and wider metropolitan Melbourne for their recreational and nature-conservation values.

The current estimated population for the municipality is more than 162,000 (2016 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing).

The Plan is required to specifically inform both the State Government and interested parties on how Council has equipped and trained its authorised officers, and provided processes for them to enforce the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* and associated regulations. The plan is not intended to regulate how the Council investigates or enforces its Local Laws or other policies that relate to animal management. These Local Laws and policies may be referred to where they complement the Plan, and will be enforced in conjunction with the Plan where appropriate.



Background

Council's role in animal management

The core purpose of Moreland City Council's animal management service is to:

- implement Council's responsibilities under the Act and the General Local Law
- promote the welfare of dogs and cats
- inform and educate the community about the needs of companion animals, the benefits associated with pets and responsible pet ownership
- respond to issues raised by the community about nuisance animals, e.g. barking dogs.



Designated off-leash areas

Section 26(2) of the Act requires dogs to be on a leash in public places except for designated off-leash areas. The General Local Law further requires dogs to be on a leash in specific public places (e.g. around playgrounds and picnic areas).

The following parks within Moreland have designated off-leash areas:

Coburg

- McDonald Reserve
- DeChene Reserve
- Bridges Reserve
- Anderson Reserve
- Campbell Reserve
- Shore Reserve
- Egan Reserve
- Bowden Reserve

Coburg North

- Cash Reserve
- Richards Reserve
- Hosken Reserve
- Parker Reserve
- Jackson Reserve

Brunswick

- Clifton Park
- A G Gillon Oval
- Gilpin Park
- Reaburn Reserve
- Fleming Park
- Balfe Park
- Methven Park
- Roberts Reserve

Brunswick East

- Jones Park
- Phillips Reserve
- Sumner Park
- Abrahams Reserve
- Kirkdale Park

Brunswick West

- Sheils Reserve
- Holbrook Reserve
- Braddy Reserve
- Wylie Reserve
- Dunstan reserve
- Fraser Reserve

Fawkner

- Charles Mutton Reserve
- Moomba Park Reserve

Glenroy

- Sewell Reserve
- Wallace Reserve
- Gervase Ave Reserve
- Jacana Valley
- Kingsford Smith Ulm Reserve

Pascoe Vale

- Joyce Reserve
- Raeburn Reserve
- Austin Crescent Reserve
- Hallam Reserve
- Cole Reserve
- Rayner Reserve

Pascoe Vale South

- Esselemont Reserve
- Brearly Reserve
- Morris Reserve

Oak Park

- J P Fawknor Reserve

Hadfield

- Martin Reserve
- Tony Mommson Reserve

Training of Authorised Officers

The Act requires that the Plan outlines programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of the Act in the Council's municipal district.

Context

Moreland's population forecasts estimate a residential population of 178,609 as at May 2017. The population has increased by 11% since 2013. It is estimated that the population could reach 200,163 by 2021.

The following data (as at 1 July 2017) outlines the demographic makeup for which animal management officers provide services.

14,232 registered animals:

- 9,619 registered dogs
- 4,613 cats registered.

Thirteen domestic animal businesses registered:

- one pet shop
- 11 boarding establishments
- one day-care facility.

The Animal Management Team comprises two full-time Animal Management Officers and one full-time Local Laws and Animal Management Officer.

Officers are responsible for the investigation of dog attacks, domestic animal businesses, and the development of education programs and enforcement activities in accordance with the Domestic Animals Act and Council's General Local Law. Officers are also responsible for attending service requests related to animals at large, park patrols and also the investigation of barking-dog complaints and other related requests for service.

Current and planned training

Moreland is committed to ensuring that the Animal Management Team has the capacity to achieve goals and objectives and to provide an effective and professional animal management service to the community.

Council's corporate training program incorporates a diverse range of development and learning opportunities for employees. All authorised officers undergo an induction program to ensure familiarity with the relevant standard work practices and guidelines.

Through the annual performance development review (PDR) process, all staff are assessed for competency and any skill gaps are identified. Training is agreed and subsequently provided.

The table below sets out the training activities currently undertaken by Animal Management Officers and those activities that are anticipated in the life of the Plan. Staff will continue to receive training in fraud awareness, customer service, operational procedures, and animal handling. They will also be encouraged to attend industry information and training sessions.

Authorised Officer Training	Current (2017)	Planned
Industry training – animal handling, animal assessment, statement taking, prosecution, computer skills. Animal Management Officer # 1 Animal Management Officer # 2 Local Laws and Animal Management Officer	Completed by all 3 Officers	Ongoing
OH&S training – dealing with aggressive customers Animal Management Officer # 1 Animal Management Officer # 2 Local Laws and Animal Management Officer	Completed by all 3 Officers	Refresher in 2018
OH&S training – Baton training Animal Management Officer # 1 Animal Management Officer # 2 Local Laws and Animal Management Officer	Completed by all 3 Officers	Refresher in 2018
Cert IV in Local Government Animal Management Officer # 1 Animal Management Officer # 2 Local Laws and Animal Management Officer	Completed Relevant experience (over 5 years)	2019
Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) – training and information days Animal Management Officer # 1 Animal Management Officer # 2 Local Laws and Animal Management Officer	No No Attended	Several times each year, as required
Hands-on animal handling training Animal Management Officer # 1 Animal Management Officer # 2 Local Laws and Animal Management Officer	Completed by all 3 Officers	Refresher in 2018
Induction training with Senior Officer and council e-learning Animal Management Officer # 1 Animal Management Officer # 2 Local Laws and Animal Management Officer	Completed by all 3 Officers	Ongoing courses and e-learning
Australian Institute of Animal Management annual workshop Animal Management Officer # 1 Animal Management Officer # 2 Local Laws and Animal Management Officer	All 3 to attend in 2017 and then annually	

Our plans

Objective 1: Ensure officers are trained and skilled.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify the minimum level of training required for authorised officers	Year one of the Plan	To be reviewed annually
Develop an induction program suitable for Animal Management Officers	Year one of the Plan	Documentation to be finalised and incorporated into the training register by 1 July 2018.
Ensure all Officers attend industry training and seminars	Ongoing	To be reviewed annually

Objective 2: Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) to enable consistent enforcement and education.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop SOP's in consultation with Authorised Officers.	Year one of the plan	Documented SOPs



Registration and identification

The Act requires that the Plan outlines programs, services and strategies to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats.

This part of the Plan also addresses the requirement to:

- set out a method to evaluate whether the animal-control services provided by Council are adequate to bring effect to the requirements of the Act
- ensure that people comply with the Act, regulations and any related legislation
- provide for the review of existing orders made under the Act and Local Laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats in the municipality are desirable
- provide for the periodic evaluation of any programs, service strategies or reviews outlined under the Plan.

Current situation

All cats and dogs over the age of three months must be implanted with a microchip and registered with the municipal council in which they reside. Registrations must be renewed annually by 10 April.

The following data illustrates the trends in domestic animal registrations.

Annual registrations	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Cats	2,916	3,424	4,075	4,613
Dogs	6,264	7,315	8,637	9,619
Total	9,180	10,739	12,712	14,232

There has been a steady increase in registrations since 2014. This could be partly attributed to Moreland's increased residential population – along with active education programs – over the last three years. This increase is also reflected in some of the service statistics.

It is known that not all dogs and cats are registered. There are two challenges associated with registrations: obtaining the first registration and ensuring pet owners renew their registration annually.

There has been a 158% increase in cat registrations over the period 2011 – 12 to 2016 – 17 and a 154% increase in dog registrations over the same period. There has been a 155% net increase in pet registrations since the previous Domestic Animal Management Plan was adopted by Council.

Council continues to use the following actions to boost registration:

- Reminding residents of non-renewed registrations via reminder letters (through mail, email and SMSs)
- Reviewing and improving the registration process
- Reviewal of promotional material regarding positive benefits of registration
- Liaison with local veterinary practices to ensure relevant information on responsible pet ownership is available
- Increasing registration education in parks by Animal Management Officers.

Our orders, Local Laws, Council policies and procedures

Moreland City Council utilises registration enforcement options as required, including the issuing of official warnings, the issuing of infringements, notices to comply, and court prosecution.

Moreland City Council General Local Law 2007 – 2017 regulates the number of cats and dogs that can be kept on a property. Unless permitted under the Planning Scheme applicable to the land, a person must not, without a permit, keep or allow to be kept on any land, any more of each species or group of animals and birds specified in the Local Law. This Local Law is currently being reviewed.

Council has several policies and procedures in relation to the registration and identification of dogs and cats:

- Application for registration and renewal of registration of dogs and cats
- Procedure for seizing and impounding unregistered and/or unidentified dogs and cats
- Process for issuing notices to comply, infringement notices and filing charges for prosecution
- Process for yearly follow-ups on unpaid renewals.

Our current education/promotion activities

Council provides the following educational and community awareness activities:

- Pro-rata registration for new applications from 10 July each year
- Follow-up of registrations for dogs and cats purchased from pet shops and shelters
- Follow-up of registrations for adopted dogs and cats
- Free applications from July for registered animals moving from another Victorian municipality into Moreland
- Email and posted mail of registration renewals as well as text messaging to remind owners to re-register their dogs and cats
- Use of corporate communication tools such as the Leader Newspaper, 'Messages on Hold', decals on animal management vans, Council's website and social media during renewal period
- Online application for new registrations (along with hard-copy application forms available on request and at Customer Service Centres)
- Online payment for renewal registrations
- Brochures and information provided at Customer Service Centres (and upon request)
- Registration application forms required to be available at all domestic-animal businesses

Our current compliance activities

The enforcement of registration checks and renewals includes:

- regular park patrols, including random checks of registration and tag details
- use of microchip scanners on patrols
- issuing a registration renewal notice in advance of the due date (10 April) each year
- a reminder text followed by a reminder notice for unpaid registrations after this date
- a final notice.

If the final notice is not paid within the allotted time and the pet owner still resides at the address, infringement notices may be issued.

Summary

Over the past four years Council's strategies have resulted in an increase of registration and compliance within the municipality.

Over the next four years, Council will consider new initiatives and continue existing programs to ensure pet owners register their dogs and cats as required by the Act.



Our plans

Objective 1: Increase dog and cat registration numbers

Activity	When	Evaluation
Mail-out registration renewals in March and have a set plan for following up unpaid renewals	March (annually)	Monitor unpaid renewals Monitor total registration numbers
Ensure notifications-of-sale of animals by domestic-animal businesses are acted on	Ongoing	Demonstrate all animals are registered within one month of purchase

Objective 2: Improve the animal-registration database

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure all impounded animals are registered to their owner prior to release.	Ongoing	Review data from pound and monitor registration details
Compare Council's animal registration database with relevant data from the major microchip registries	Every six months	Review data from microchip registries against Council data

Objective 3: Improve responsible pet ownership and education to increase registrations

Activity	When	Evaluation
Increase patrol targets	Ongoing	Monitor enforcement action and interaction with community at parks and reserves
Review website and explore other communication opportunities that arise through technological advancement	Year two of the Plan	Determine communication feedback and monitor views per page on website
Provide a subsidised desexing program in conjunction with local vets	Ongoing	Monitor uptake from the community and registration outcomes – dependent on budget impacts
Develop a primary school education program	Year three of the Plan	Monitor uptake from local primary schools – dependent on budget impacts



Nuisance

The Act requires that the Plan outlines programs, services and strategies to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance.

This part also addresses the requirement to:

- set out a method to evaluate whether the animal control services provided by the council are adequate to bring effect to the requirements of the Act
- promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats
- ensure that people comply with the Act, regulations and legislation
- provide for the review of existing orders made under the Act and Local Laws
- provide for the periodic evaluation of any programs, service strategies or reviews as outlined under the Plan.

Current situation

There are a range of complaints relating to nuisance provisions. These include:

- dog attacks
- allowing faeces to remain in public places
- odour
- traffic hazards caused by wandering pets
- animals trespassing onto private property
- barking dogs
- fighting between cats or dogs
- breeding of unwanted cats
- cat hoarding
- dogs off leash in parks/reserves.

In the 2016 – 17 financial year Animal Management Officers:

- investigated 303 barking dog complaints
- received 170 reports of dogs at large
- investigated 115 reports of alleged dog attacks or rushes
- received 451 requests for cat cages
- received 335 requests relating to 'other' animal violations.

Appendix 3 lists the types and number of complaints received over the 2014 – 2017 period.

Council encourages dog owners to maintain adequate fencing to prevent animals wandering from their premises. Council provides services to collect wandering animals and may impound dogs, issue infringements and prosecute pet owners when an offence is committed.

Council provides a cat-trapping program and any registered cat that is trapped is identified through its registration tag and/or microchip number. The owner may be issued with an infringement under section 23 of the Act.

The cat-trapping procedure is reviewed annually in conjunction with statistics obtained by Council's animal services provider. A refined cat cage and trapping procedure has led to improvements in officer safety.

Barking dogs

All dogs bark. It is when their barking is excessive that this is unreasonable. The reasons a dog may bark excessively include:

- external stimuli (e.g. passers-by, other dogs barking, possums, cats)
- separation anxiety
- territoriality (visitors to the property)
- boredom
- neglect
- poor health
- lack of adequate space or exercise.

Barking-dog complaints can involve long periods of investigation and mediation. If a complaint about a barking dog is proven, the owner may be issued with an infringement or taken to court.

Dogs in public places

Public parks where dogs can exercise and socialise with other dogs are important. Moreland has 51 off-leash parks across the municipality. In all other parts of the municipality, dogs are required to be leashed.

Dogs in public places present challenges, including:

- compliance by dog owners with off-leash requirements
- compliance with dogs being prohibited from certain public places or areas within public places (e.g. within 15 metres of a playground)
- effective control of dogs in off-leash areas
- removal of dog faeces from public places.

Trespass and confinement of cats

Section 23 of the Act makes it an offence for a cat to remain on private property without permission, and landowners or occupiers may trap cats found trespassing on their property.

This relates to both owned and unowned cats. However, the Act does not specify a requirement for cats to be confined to their owner's property.

In 2016 – 2017 Moreland received 451 requests for cat cages. This number has decreased by 8% from the 2015/2016 financial year.

Moreland City Council, along with the RSPCA, the Lost Dogs Home, the Cat Protection Society and other animal welfare agencies will continue to actively encourage cat owners to keep their cats confined to their property and inside at night. Council will do this by encouraging responsible pet ownership through information on its website and in literature provided to cat owners. This information will be updated and reviewed periodically.

Enclosed dog park

In the 2013 – 2017 Domestic Animal Management Plan, Council committed to investigating the possibility of funding a dog-agility park. This is an area that is fenced off with a dual-access gate entry.

Benefits of providing an enclosed dog park include:

- people are more likely to interact in public places when accompanied by dogs
- areas which attract dog owners are often community social hubs
- off-leash and agility areas encourage owners to exercise with their dogs
- well-exercised dogs are less likely to become bored and a nuisance.

In August 2017, Council consulted with the community to determine if there was support for an enclosed dog park and to determine the preferred location of the park. Council received overwhelming support for the construction of an enclosed park. Construction of the first enclosed dog park will occur in the 2017/18 financial year and a second dog park in the 2018/19 financial year.

Our current orders, Local Laws, Council policies and procedures

Moreland City Council requires dogs to be in effective control in any public place, other than designated off-leash areas, and prohibits dogs from being present in specific areas of the municipality.

Council's General Local Law regulates the number of cats and dogs that may be kept on private property. In addition the Local Law requires dog owners to remove and dispose of any waste deposited by the dog. It is an offence not to carry a litter device when out in public with a dog.

Our current education/promotion activities

Council provides information and advice on methods of resolving nuisance in the community. This information is reviewed periodically and regular updates made to literature provided to complainants and animal owners. Complainants are encouraged to speak to the owner of the animal causing the nuisance.

Council will continue the ongoing review of signage related to control of dogs in parks and will continue its education and proactive compliance through programmed park patrols.

Our current compliance activities

Animal Management Officers currently respond to complaints resulting in investigation, infringements and, when necessary, prosecution. Officers proactively patrol Council parks, reserves and residential areas. Officers actively work with other agencies on broader nuisance issues, including the DEDJTR, Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and Victoria Police.

Summary

The nuisance caused by barking dogs is a matter that requires an ongoing assessment of the levels of reasonable complaint and whether or not Council's activities in any way help reduce these levels. Not all barking dog complaints can be prevented. In the first instance, education and prevention are more effective ways of dealing with these matters.

In the same way, the issue of cat trespass is affected greatly by the levels of compliance and responsible pet ownership and future actions will be aimed at reviewing and upgrading actions by Council depending on the complaint levels.



Our plans

Objective 1: Reduce the number of nuisance complaints

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review and evaluate Council's response to complaints about barking dogs and explore best-practice models to inform a revised procedure and educative materials	Year two of the Plan	Monitor complaints via the Council quarterly report and compare jobs received versus jobs completed

Objective 2: Reduce the number of complaints relating to trespassing cats

Activity	When	Evaluation
Update Council's website with links to the DEDJTR webpage on cat containment	Year one of the Plan	Complete review and implement changes
Review existing publications about responsible cat ownership from a range of organisations and providers with the view to making such publications available at Council offices and libraries		

Objective 3: Reduce the number of instances of dog faeces being deposited in public places

Activity	When	Evaluation
With assistance from the Open Space department, identify and understand the parks and reserves where there is a higher prevalence of owners failing to remove faeces deposited by their dogs	Year one of the Plan and ongoing	Complete review and implement changes – dependent on budget implications
Increase park patrols		



Dog attacks

The Act requires that the Plan outlines programs, services and strategies to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals.

This part also address the requirements to:

- set out a method to evaluate the animal-control services provided by the council are adequate to bring effect to the requirements of the Act
- promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats
- ensure that people comply with the Act, regulations and legislation
- provide for the review of existing orders made under the Act and Local Laws
- provide for the periodic evaluation of any programs, service strategy or review outlined under this plan.

Current situation

In the 2016 – 17 financial year Animal Management Officers investigated 115 reports of alleged dog attacks or rushes. There has been a 29% increase in reported alleged dog attacks or rushes from 2015 – 16 to 2016 – 17 (see Appendix 1). This could be attributed to population growth, increased community awareness and reporting of incidents. Reducing risks and responding to attacks is a core role of the Animal Management Unit. All reports of alleged attacks and rushes are investigated. Infringements may be issued where evidence substantiates the rush or attack. Serious dog attacks that result in serious injury or death to a person or other are taken to court for prosecution. In 2016 – 2017 two cases were taken to court and both resulted in successful prosecution.

Our orders, Local Laws, Council policies and procedures

Council has the following procedures:

- collection of stray, abandoned or injured animals
- capture of dogs at large
- investigation of dog attacks/rushes
- regular park patrols
- recording all dangerous dogs on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry and conducting annual audits of their properties
- prosecution for serious dog attacks
- information and education programs on effective control of dogs in public places
- procedures for dealing with dangerous and/or aggressive dogs.

Our current education/promotion activities

Council provides the following educational and community awareness activities:

- ongoing review of signage related to control of dogs in parks
- education/enforcement campaigns through programmed park patrols.

Our current compliance activities

Council utilises enforcement options as defined by the Act including:

- issuing official warnings
- issuing notice to comply
- issuing infringement notices
- declaring dogs as menacing or dangerous
- court prosecutions
- seeking an order for the destruction of a dog/s.

Summary

Dog attacks remain a key priority for the Animal Management Team. Council recognises that the community expects that dog attacks are investigated and actioned in accordance with the Act.

Our plans

Objective 1: Increase reporting of dog attacks in the community

Activity	When	Evaluation
Improve public awareness of what a dog attack is and how to report one	Year one of the Plan	Meet regularly with Council's Communication and Customer Service Branch and provide feedback and information for the intranet, website and other public advertising outlets

Objective 2: Minimise the incidence of dog attacks

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review existing education material and include specific content on how to reduce dog attacks	Year one of the Plan	Material reviewed by July 2018

Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs

The Act requires that the Plan outlines programs, services and strategies to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted-breed dogs and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with the Act and relevant guidelines.

This part also address the requirement to:

- set out a method to evaluate whether the services provided by council are adequate to bring effect to the requirement of the Act
- promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats
- ensure that people comply with the Act, regulations and legislation
- provide for the review of existing orders made under the Act and Local Laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats
- provide for the periodic evaluation of any programs, service strategies or reviews as outlined in the plan.

Current situation

Council administers and enforces provisions of the Act to identify and control dangerous, menacing and restricted-breed dogs to ensure the safety of the community. The number of restricted breed, dangerous dogs and menacing dogs has not changed since 2014 – 15. Moreland has one registered restricted-breed dog, three registered dangerous-breed dogs and one registered declared-menacing dog.

Our orders, Local Laws, Council policies and procedures

Moreland City Council's registration application and renewal forms require all owners to declare if their dog is a restricted breed, has been declared menacing or is a dangerous dog as required by the Act.

Our current compliance activities

Current compliance activities include:

- annual and unscheduled inspections of properties housing declared dangerous, restricted-breed and menacing dogs
- Patrols by Animal Management Officers of all areas and parks to monitor dog behaviour
- Maintenance of data on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry
- Investigation of reports of restricted breed dogs.

Our current education/promotion activities

Council provides information on choosing a pet on its website, with a link to the DEDJTR website.

Summary

Council proactively administers and enforces legislative requirements regarding restricted-breed, menacing and declared-dangerous dogs

Our plans

Objective 1: Identify and register all declared dogs in the municipality

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct an annual audit of declared -dangerous and restricted-breed dog properties	Annually	Demonstrate minimum of one annual audit of owner's premises
Audit VDDR database	Annually	To be cross-referenced by April 11 yearly

Objective 2: Improve monitoring of existing restricted breed dogs

Activity	When	Evaluation
Continue planned and random audit inspections	Ongoing	Reports compiled during each inspection



Overpopulation and euthanasia

The Act requires that the Plan outline programs, services and strategies to address overpopulation and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats.

This part also addresses the requirement to:

- set out a method to evaluate whether the services provided by Council are adequate to bring effect to the requirements of the Act
- promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats
- ensure that people comply with the Act, regulations and legislation
- provide for the review of existing orders made under the Act and Local Laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats
- provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service strategy or review outlined under the Plan.

Current situation

Impound rates have increased marginally over the previous years (see appendix 2).

Based on the 2016 – 17 financial year data, the proportion of impounded dogs that are reclaimed by their owner is 93%. By contrast the proportion of impounded cats that are reclaimed by their owner is 9%. The majority of impounded cats are unowned cats.

In the 2016 – 17 financial year 682 cats were impounded. Of these 73% were deemed to be stray cats that were not suitable for rehoming.

Animals that are not reclaimed are offered for rehoming if they meet temperament and health requirements. Animals may be euthanased if they have an untreatable disease or if they have temperament issues that pose a risk to the community.

Compulsory desexing of cats

This plan will see the introduction of a compulsory desexing of cats requirement. An exception applies when a veterinarian has advised against desexing for health reasons or where a cat is being kept for recognised breeding purposes. Owners will need to provide Council with a letter from their veterinarian or a copy of the breeding certificate. A financial incentive will be provided to owners to desex their cats.

Desexing not only reduces the population of stray, unwanted animals, but it also helps pets to live longer and healthier lives.

Council will promote the Who's for Cats website (www.whosforcats.com.au) and program.

This is an initiative of Animal Welfare Science Centre, Australian Veterinary Association, Cat Protection Society, RSPCA, the Lort Smith Animal Hospital, the Lost Dogs' Home, Monash University, Municipal Association of Victoria and Victorian Animal Aid. The program is aimed at people who feed cats that do not belong to them and who, in doing so, increase the stray cat population and in turn the number of unwanted cats that need to be euthanised. Unwanted cats often have infectious diseases and are wild. In most cases it is not appropriate for them to be rehomed.

Cat owners who have their cat desexed and microchipped will receive the first year of registration free. Subsequent annual registration renewal will be at a reduced rate. This will provide an incentive for owners to desex their cats.

Our orders, Local Laws, Council policies and procedures

Moreland General Local Law of 2007 regulates the number of cats and dogs that can be kept on a property – a maximum of two dogs and two cats per property and a maximum of one dog and one cat per unit or flat.

Our current education and promotion activities

Council provides the following educational and community awareness activities:

- Media campaigns promoting responsible pet ownership
- Cat-trapping service (available to all residents)
- Reduced-rate desexing program for eligible pet owners.

Our current compliance activities

Current compliance activities include:

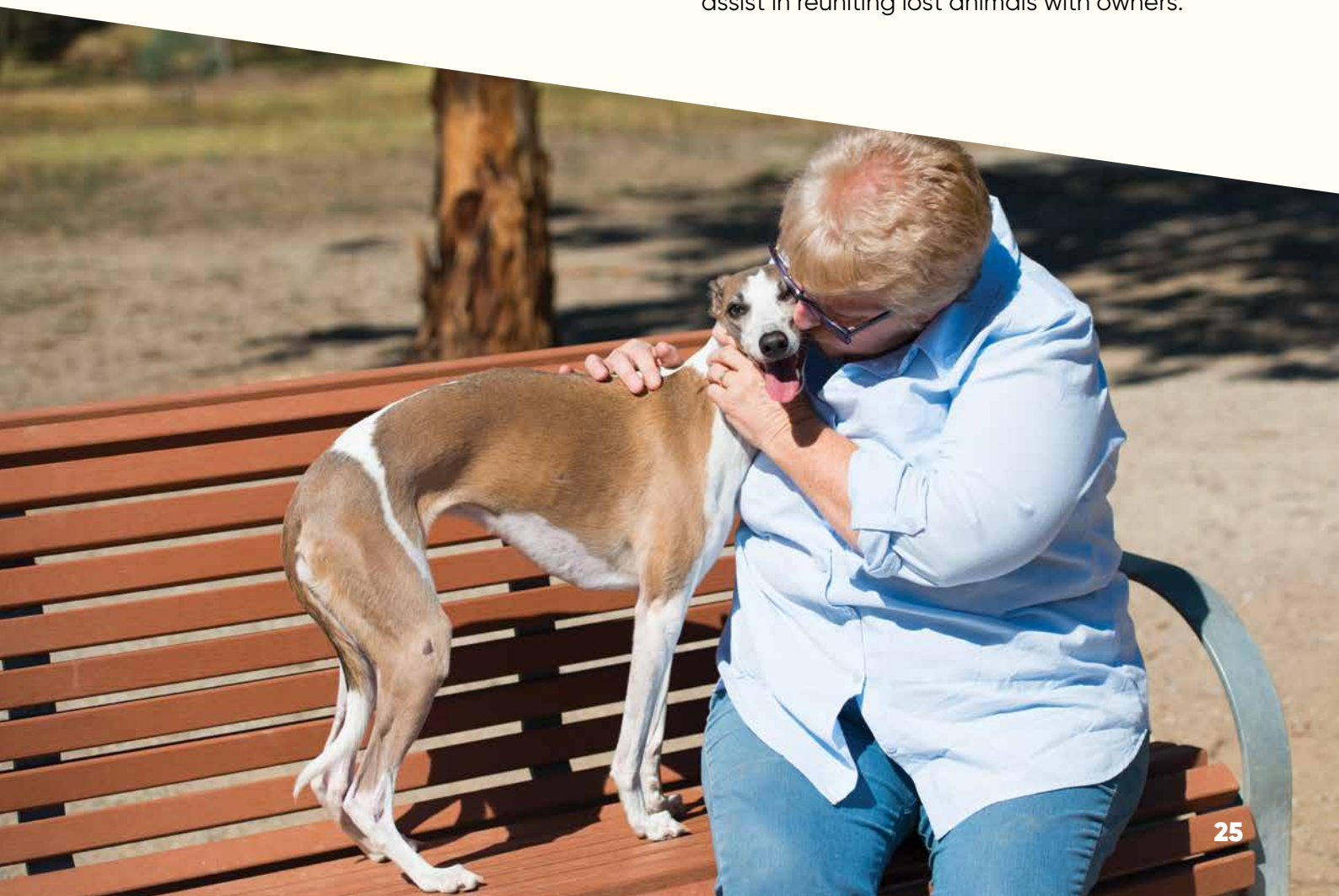
- Investigation of reports of animal hoarding
- Enforcement of registration, microchipping and tag-wearing requirements
- Issuing of infringement notices for dogs and cats found at large.

Summary

Over-population and high euthanasia rates are some of the most challenging aspects of the animal management service for Moreland.

The level of complaints about nuisance cats and the number of requests for cat cages suggests that cat population is a wide problem within the municipality. This plan seeks to address this issue.

Council will continue to actively promote the benefits of responsible pet ownership including desexing, microchipping and registration to assist in reuniting lost animals with owners.



Our plans

Objective 1: Increase the number of animals that are reunited with their owners

Activity	When	Evaluation
Promote the benefits of responsible pet ownership including registration	Ongoing	Reduction in the number of unclaimed animals

Objective 2: Reduce the number of stray and wild cats

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review and update all material on the impacts of cat overpopulation and the benefits of obtaining a pet from an approved animal shelter.	Year one of the Plan	Demonstrate updated information by July 2018
Introduce compulsory cat desexing*	Year one of the Plan	Reduction in the number of stray or wild cats
Offer the first year of registration free for cat owners who have their cat desexed and microchipped	Year one of the Plan	
Promote the Who's for Cats website (www.whosforcats.com.au) and program.	Year one of the Plan and ongoing	Reduction in the number of stray or wild cats

* Except where a veterinarian has advised against desexing for health reasons or where a cat is being kept for recognised breeding purposes.

Objective 3: Reduce the number of cats euthanised

Activity	When	Evaluation
Consider programs to address unowned cats	Year three of the Plan	Reduction in the percentage of cats euthanised

Domestic animal businesses

The Act requires that the Plan outlines programs, services and strategies to ensure that people comply with the Act, regulations and any related legislation.

This part of the plan also addresses the requirement to:

- set out a method to evaluate whether the animal-control services provided by Council are adequate to bring effect to the requirements of the Act
- ensure that people comply with the Act, regulations and any related legislation
- provide for the review of existing orders made under the Act and Local Laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats in the municipal district are desirable
- provide for the periodic evaluation of any programs, service strategies or reviews, as outlined under the Plan.

Current situation

Council is responsible for registering premises as domestic animal businesses. Moreland has thirteen registered domestic animal businesses comprising:

- one pet shop
- 11 boarding establishments
- one day-care facility.

Our orders, Local Laws and Council policies and procedures

Officers inspect domestic animal businesses to ensure their operation complies with the relevant Code of Practice. Where non-compliance is detected, work plans are provided to assist businesses to address areas of non-compliance within agreed timeframes. Enforcement options are available and include the issuing of official warnings, notices to comply, infringement notices and court prosecution.

Our current education/promotion activities

Domestic animal businesses are provided with the Code of Practice and relevant literature and reference materials necessary to educate their customers.

Our current compliance activities

Council currently audits existing domestic animal businesses annually to ensure compliance with the relevant Code of Practice. Council has the ability to issue warnings, infringements, notices to comply or to prosecute businesses that fail to comply with work plans and the relevant Code of Practice.

Summary

Council will continue auditing existing businesses and will address non-compliance issues. Programs will be developed to identify unregistered businesses. Education material will also be developed and application processes reviewed to ensure businesses comply with the Code of Conduct and other relevant legislation and requirements.

Our plans

Objective 1: Identify and register all domestic animal businesses in the municipality

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify all businesses that should be registered as domestic animal businesses in the municipality	Year one of the Plan and ongoing	Standard work guidelines developed and implemented by March 2018

Objective 2: Ensure compliance by domestic animal businesses

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop a domestic animal business audit program	Year one of the Plan	Standard work guidelines developed and implemented by March 2018
Review application and renewal processes	Year one of the Plan	Standard work guidelines developed and implemented by March 2018
Investigate and act upon public information about non-compliance	Ongoing	All requests are actioned within allocated time frame



Other matters

The Act requires that the Plan provides for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary.

This part also addresses the requirement to:

- set out a method to evaluate whether the services provided by Council are adequate to bring effect to the requirements of the Act
- promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats
- ensure that people comply with the Act, regulations and legislation
- provide for the review of existing orders made under the Act and Local Laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats
- provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service strategies or reviews, as outlined under the Plan.

Current situation

Epping Animal Welfare Facility (EAWF)

In December 2015, the cities of Moreland, Whittlesea and Darebin entered into an agreement to develop and operate a regional pound to be located in Epping.

Responsibility for the operation of the EAWF was awarded to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) Victoria. The facility opened 16 October 2017.

RSPCA have significant experience in animal care and welfare, with a strong focus on foster care, adoption and the rehoming of animals.

RSPCA will introduce a high volume cat de-sexing program to reduce the number of stray cats and thereby reduce costs to Council.

Safe Haven for Pets Program

Moreland City Council is committed to preventing family violence and violence against women and men. The decision not to leave a violent home situation can be related to concerns about the ongoing care and welfare of domestic animals.

In 2014 the Safe Haven for Pets Program was developed. The program provides free temporary animal shelter for Moreland residents leaving situations of family violence. Council provides 7 – 10 days of free housing for any domestic animal within the municipality when the need for urgent relocation is required to remove an individual from a violent environment.

This service will continue to be offered.

Annual review of plan and annual reporting

The Act requires that every Council review its Domestic Animal Management Plan annually and if appropriate amend the Plan; provide the Secretary with a copy of the Plan and any amendment to the Plan; and publish an evaluation of its implementation of the Plan in its annual report.

Objective 1: Annual review of plan and reporting

Activity	When	Evaluation
Establish an annual timeline and program for reviewing the Plan and evaluating its implementation	Year one of the Plan	Ensure reporting requirements are met
Complete an evaluation of the Plan and submit the evaluation to Council for approval along with proposed amendments	Annually	Evaluation completed
If the Plan is amended, submit a copy to the Secretary	Annually	Amended Plan is submitted to the Secretary
Publish an evaluation of the implementation of the Plan in the Council's annual report	Annually	Evaluation published in the annual report

Appendix 1

The table below details the type and number of offences that have resulted in the issue of enforcement notices.

Enforcement action by offence category	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Dog/cat not wearing ID marker	0	0	1
Dog at large daytime	104	112	189
Dog at large night time	13	12	29
Dog/cat not under effective control	5	2	6
Fail to register dog/cat	8	47	121
Fail to renew registration dog/cat	2	2	8
Dog attack - non-serious injury	2	1	1
Prosecutions – e.g. serious dog attacks	2	3	2
Reported attacks and rushes	112	89	115
Seized as a result of a dog attack	2	2	2

Appendix 2

Dogs	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Impounded	482	423	461
Returned to owner	427 (88%)	345 (81%)	429 (93%)
Euthanasia (feral or unsafe to be rehomed)	31 (6%)	18 (4%)	18 (4%)
Rehomed	24 (5%)	60 (14%)	14 (3%)
Total dogs	482	423	461
Cats			
Impounded	537	600	682
Returned to owner	34 (6%)	42 (7%)	61(9%)
Euthanasia (feral or unsafe to be rehomed)	448 (83%)	494 (82%)	501 (73%)
Rehomed	55 (10%)	64 (11%)	120 (18%)
Total cats	537	600	682

Appendix 3

Summary of customer service requests

The data below illustrates the number of contacts received by Council from customers in relation to nuisance caused by cats and dogs:

Nature of Complaint	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Barking dogs	307	288	303
Domestic animal pick-up	710	684	739
Dog at large	206	150	170
Excess animal permits	106	94	111
Cat-cage requests	469	492	451
Dog attacks and rushes	112	89	115
Animal violations (includes unregistered dog/cat, defecating, off-lead in park/reserve and excessive animals)	347	387	335



Moreland City Council

For further information, contact Moreland City Council by:

Phone: 9240 1111

Website: moreland.vic.gov.au

Moreland Language Link

有關摩爾蘭德市政廳 的詳情請致電	9280 1910	要进一步了解Moreland 市政府的信息，请拨打	9280 0750
Per informazioni sul Comune di Moreland telefonare a	9280 1911	ਮੋਰਲੈਂਡ ਸਿਟੀ ਕੌਮਲ ਬਾਰੇ ਵਧੇਰੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲਈ ਟ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ	9280 0751
Για πληροφορίες σχετικά με το Δήμο Moreland τηλεφωνήστε στο	9280 1912		
للحصول على معلومات عن بلدية مورلاند اتصلوا على الرقم	9280 1913		
Moreland Belediyesi hakkında bilgi almak için aranabilecek telefon	9280 1914		
Nếu muốn biết thêm chi tiết về Hội đồng Thành phố Moreland, xin quý vị gọi số	9280 1915		
मोरलैंड सिटी काउंसिल के बारे में जानकारी प्राप्त करने के लिए फोन करें	9280 1918		
		All other languages including العربية, Croatian, Tagalog, Indonesia, Polski, සිංහල, Español, ትግርኛ, اردو	9280 1919

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