

# PALMERSTON ANIMAL MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

AGENDA ITEM:	7.1.1
REPORT TITLE:	Animal By-Laws Review Consultation Update
REPORT NUMBER:	PAMAC9/037
MEETING DATE:	30/06/2021
AUTHOR:	Jocelyn Cull, Manager Regulatory Services
APPROVER:	Director of Community and Lifestyle, Amelia Vellar.

## COMMUNITY PLAN

**Family and Community:** Palmerston is a safe and family friendly community where everyone belongs.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Animal Management By-Laws Review community consultation which ran from 9 March 2021 to 8 May 2021.

## KEY MESSAGES

Council's current animal management by-laws were enacted in 1999 and have had no significant content change since their enactment.

An update of the current animal management by-laws to meet community expectations has been identified by Council as a priority action.

Council has undertaken a process of community consultation where the community was asked their opinions on the various elements of the Palmerston Animal Management By-laws review.

The consultation ran from Tuesday 9 March 2021 to Saturday 8 May 2021 with information provided on the City of Palmerston website, social media posts, a discussion paper and accompanying online and hard copy surveys.

City of Palmerston staff met with community members at various locations within the municipality over the extended access period of 60 days consultation.

City of Palmerston staff members were also available to talk with individual community members and groups such as the Palmerston Animal Management Advisory Committee and Dog Park users.

Feedback to the 27 questions was received from 260 people and one special interest organisation.

205 "free text" responses were received.

The majority of feedback was received from residents living in Roseberry, Durack, Bakewell, and Woodroffe.

The highest level of response was received from 35-44-year old's (26.95%).

The findings from the community consultation will help inform Council's approach to the development and endorsement of guiding principles, drafting instructions and the drafting of the by-laws by the Office of the Parliamentary Council.

## RECOMMENDATION

THAT Report Number PAMAC9/037 entitled Animal Management By-Laws Review Consultation Update to be received and noted.

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## BACKGROUND

At the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ordinary Council Meeting of 17 November 2020, Council endorsed the following recommendations:

*Animal Management By-Laws Update and Public Consultation Discussion Paper*

1. THAT the report entitled *Animal Management By-Laws Update and Public Consultation Discussion Paper* be received and noted.
2. THAT Council endorses a review of the Palmerston (Animal Management) By-Laws 1999 to ensure that they are modern and reflective of the community's needs, utilising the process outlined in the report entitled *Animal Management By-Laws Update and Public Consultation Discussion Paper*.
3. THAT a Council workshop be held in early February 2021 regarding the discussion paper for community consultation regarding the animal management by-laws.
4. THAT a report be presented on the outcomes of the community consultation key findings and recommendations in regard to animal management by-law requirements to Council at the Second Ordinary Meeting in May 2021.

CARRIED 9/1386 - 17/11/2020

At the 1<sup>st</sup> Ordinary Council Meeting of 2 March 2021, Council endorsed the following recommendations:

*Animal Management By-Laws Review Discussion Paper and Survey Questions*

1. THAT the report entitled *Animal Management By-Laws Review Discussion Paper and Survey Questions* be received and noted.
2. THAT Council adopt the *Animal Management By-Laws Review Discussion Paper and accompanying survey questions* for the purpose of Community Consultation for a sixty-day period, as detailed within Report entitled *Animal Management By-Laws Review Discussion Paper and Survey Questions*, including minor amendments to clarify issues relating to dangerous dogs and nuisance animals.
3. THAT a Report on the outcomes of Community Consultation regarding the *Animal Management By-Laws Review Discussion Paper and survey questions* be presented to Council following conclusion of the consultation period at the Second Ordinary Meeting in May 2021.
4. THAT the Report and Council Decisions relating to Report entitled *Animal Management By-Laws Review Discussion Paper and Survey Questions* be moved to the Open Minutes at the Council meeting of 2 March 2021.

CARRIED 9/1525 - 02/03/2021

At the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ordinary Council meeting of 18 May 2021, Council endorsed the following recommendations:

*Animal Management By-Laws Consultation Update*

1. THAT Report entitled *Animal Management By-Laws Consultation Update* be received and noted.

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2. THAT Council approves that a workshop be held with Elected Members to review the Community Consultation regarding the Animal Management By-Laws findings.
3. THAT a further Report on the outcomes of Community Consultation regarding the Animal Management By-Laws including recommendations be presented to Council, following the Elected member workshop, by the 1st Ordinary Council Meeting of July 2021.

CARRIED 9/1640 - 18/05/2021

City of Palmerston is committed to providing quality animal management services to our community. A set of by-laws govern the way we manage animals in our municipality and a review is needed to improve our service delivery and meet the growing and changing needs of the Palmerston community.

Council's current animal management by-laws were enacted in 1999 and have had no significant change since their enactment. While they have served their purpose, they are no longer reflective of the community's needs or modern legislative drafting.

Council has identified an update of the current animal management by-laws to meet community expectations as a priority action. In order to do this, consulting with community to understand people's views, opinions and appetite for change was essential.

The discussion paper, as presented at Attachment A was a key component of community engagement and was designed as a communication tool to inform the community about Council's current and proposed animal management protocols and prompt community feedback.

The discussion paper included a series of feedback prompts throughout which the public could answer by taking an online survey which had more detailed questions than the discussion paper, as presented at Attachment B. A hard copy survey could also be mailed out if required.

After endorsement by Council, the Discussion Paper and accompanying survey were officially launched on Tuesday 9 March 2021 for community consultation which closed on Saturday 8 May 2021.

## DISCUSSION

Council is committed to working alongside our community and sees significant value in tapping into the 'wisdom of the crowd'. Council will work with and listen to community concerns to address the animal management issues and challenges that we have.

A key point of difference with this review was the additional step of preliminary community consultation in the by-law's development process. Council enhanced community connection by increasing community input and ownership of content at the start of the process by way of community response to the Discussion Paper. It is understood that this is the first time such an approach has been used in this jurisdiction, which Council believes will support an inclusive and transparent process.

Given the sensitive nature of the subject matter and importance of broad consultation, an extensive consultation was undertaken over an extended period increasing the access period from 21 days up to 60 days. On conclusion of consultation, Council officers collated the extensive consultation data.

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Consultation Process – Council Endorsement through to Development of Drafting Instructions



### Consultation Approach

The consultation aim was to find out the community's opinions on animal management by-law review areas.

Information was provided to members of the community on the City of Palmerston website, the Animal Management By-Laws Review Discussion Paper and accompanying survey (available online and in hard copy) and social media posts on the City of Palmerston Facebook page

The consultation also targeted identified groups such as the Palmerston Animal Management Advisory Committee and Dog Park users.



Image 1: Council officers at a “pop up” stand to discuss the consultation at Marlow Lagoon dog park.

The consultation goal was to understand what the community thinks of potential animal management by-law review areas, and the community’s priorities in this area.

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The objectives of this consultation were to:

- gauge the level of community support for the animal management by-laws review and update;
- understand community priorities for potential categories of reform;
- help Council formulate general principles for drafting instructions; and
- continue to demonstrate Council's commitment to community engagement.

The approach for the animal management by-laws review focused on:

- targeting stakeholders through existing channels, groups and organisations;
- providing general information to all stakeholders;
- providing information sessions at various locations to inform community members about the review and to invite questions and feedback;
- meeting with key stakeholders with a high level of interest in the review;
- promoting the consultation via media releases, display signage, online information, the discussion paper and staff presence at various venues and events; and
- encouraging stakeholders to complete an online survey (or hardcopy preference).

Tools and Tactics

The consultation used a variety of tools and tactics which included:



Image 2: By-Laws Review Consultation Tools

Social Media

City of Palmerston posted information on the consultation in 3 separate posts on the City of Palmerston Facebook page to encourage community feedback. The posts advertised that the consultation had opened, encouraged people to attend the information sessions and prompted people to fill out the surveys before consultation completed.

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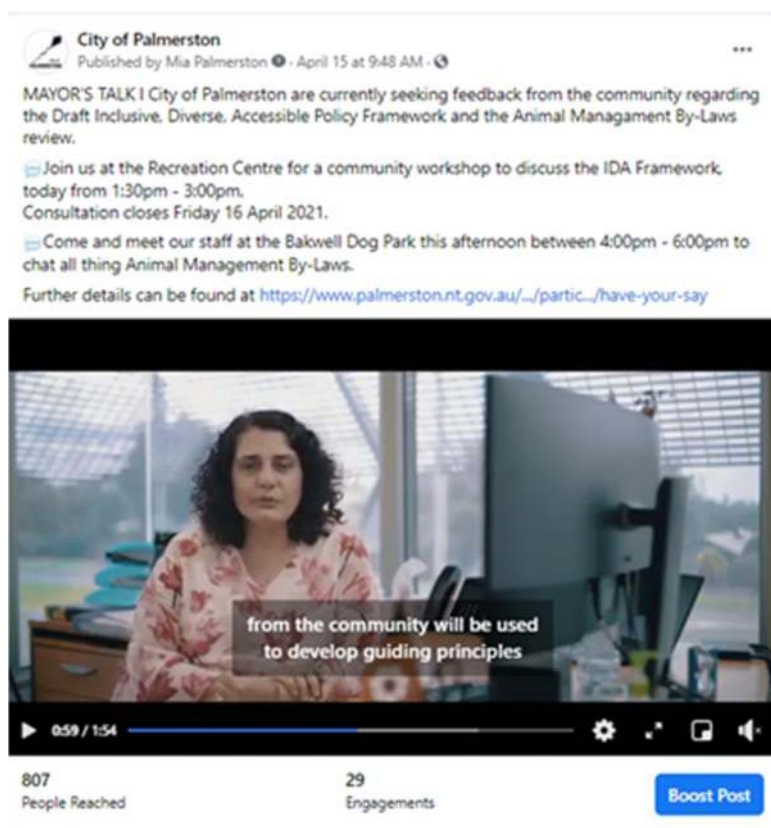


Image 3: Mayor's Talk on Animal Management By-Laws Review on 15 April 2021

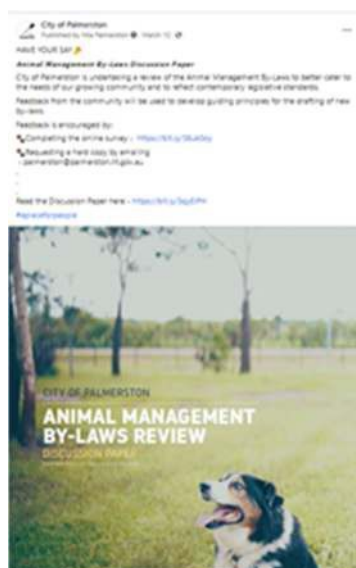


Image 4: City of Palmerston Face Book Post on 12 March 2021

## Face to Face Meetings

In late March a special meeting was convened by the Palmerston Animal Management Advisory Committee to consider the animal management by-Laws review. Council staff presented at this meeting and were available to answer questions and clarify any issues.

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## Emails, Phone Calls and Submissions

Council also engaged with the community via email and telephone calls from stakeholders who wished to participate in the consultation process but desired these more traditional mechanisms in place of the discussion paper and survey.

Council also received one formal submission from a special interest group.

## Stakeholders

The consultation targeted the following stakeholders:

- City of Palmerston residents
- Dog owners who currently use the Marlow Lagoon and Bakewell Dog Parks
- Palmerston Animal Management Advisory Committee
- Animal behaviour specialists including vets, dog trainers, dog breeders and animal rescue / welfare groups.

## Survey Responses

The main tool for collecting feedback as part of this consultation was the survey. People were directed to provide feedback online through Facebook posts linked directly to the survey and filling out hard copy surveys at the community information sessions.

The survey consisted of 27 questions. A total of 260 people completed the survey. 221 surveys were completed on-line and 39 were submitted to Council in hard copy format. One response was received from a special interest organisation. 205 "free text" responses were received.

A total of 94.14% of respondents live in Palmerston, 5.86% live in the rural area or northern suburbs. The majority of feedback was received from residents in the suburbs of Roseberry, Durack, Bakewell and Woodroffe.

A total of 74.32% of survey respondents were rate payers and 85.02% identified themselves as pet owners.

The majority of feedback was received from residents in the age brackets of 35-44 (26.95%), 25-34 (23.44%), 45-54 (16.41%) and 55-64 (16.02%).

## Next Steps

In the Second Ordinary Meeting in July, a report will be presented to Council with recommendations regarding guiding principles which reflect community sentiment for effective animal management within the municipality. Guiding principles are high level statements which encompass community expectations in the areas of responsible pet ownership, community safety and enjoyment of local amenities and appropriate environmental stewardship and sustainability. The principles will also lay the foundations and provide authority for the basis of the by-law amendments and are fundamental for Council policy development and implementation at operational level.

The general principles will also reflect the core outcomes of Palmerston being a safe and family friendly community and an environmentally friendly, liveable city that promotes renewable practices and sustainability.

Drafting instructions will then be developed and submitted to the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel; Ministerial approval will be sought and the formal process for implementation of revised animal management by-laws will be undertaken; the full process of which can take 12 to 18 months upwards in duration.

# PALMERSTON ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

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## ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

### CONSULTATION PROCESS

Given the sensitive nature of the subject matter and importance of broad consultation, staff suggested extensive consultation over an extended period increasing the access period from 21 days up to 60 days. The consultation also targeted identified groups such as the Palmerston Animal Management Advisory Committee and Dog Park users.

Council staff ensured an appropriate media and communications strategy was put in place to assist and promote the consultation process.

The following City of Palmerston staff were consulted in preparing this report:

- Regulatory Services Lead
- Regulatory Services Project Officer
- Senior Ranger

### POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy implications for this report, however when Animal Management By-Laws are formalised, new Council policies and procedures will need to be created to reflect the new by-laws and direct Council on animal management education, regulation, and compliance.

### BUDGET AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget and resource implications for this report.

### RISK, LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk, legal and legislative implications relating to this report.

### ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no environment sustainability implications for this report.

### COUNCIL OFFICER CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

We the author and approving officer declare that we do not have a conflict of interest in relation to this matter.

### ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Animal Management By-Laws Review Discussion Paper  
Attachment B: Animal Management By-Laws Review Survey