

It will soon cost \$70 to register your dog – and here's why



More than 10,000 cats a year are left at the RSPCA across Victoria, part of the reason for a 300% increase in pound management fees. Image: Stockimage.

The Terrier – Carol Altmann

WARRNAMBOOL ratepayers are in for a shock next year (2019) when it comes to putting out their rubbish and registering their pet, as the rising cost of our throwaway society starts to bite.

As has been reported elsewhere, garbage collection fees in Warrnambool are set to climb by \$70 to \$356 a year, while in neighbouring Moyne Shire the fee is rising by \$21 to \$493 a year*.

On top of this, pet owners in Warrnambool are expected to see dog and cat registration fees rise by up to almost 40%.

If the draft Warrnambool City Council budget goes ahead, in 2019 it will cost \$70 to register your desexed dog and \$59 for a desexed cat. (Last year it cost \$52 and \$41.)

The fee for a non-desexed dog will rise from \$166 to \$210 and a non-desexed cat will cost \$177, up from \$130.

And herein lies the problem, because these fee hikes are directly connected to the cost of keeping animals that are either discarded, given up, or need to be rehoused via the Warrnambool pound.

(I hasten to add that not all animals passed to the RSPCA are 'unwanted', including those that need to be rehoused due to changing personal circumstances such as illness or divorce.)

While WCC owns the Braithwaite St pound, it has for many years been out-sourced to the RSPCA and late last year the RSPCA dropped a bomb: it was no longer going to run its pound services at a loss and its fees were going up by 300%.

300%!

As council spokesman Nick Higgins explained, the WCC was paying around \$112,000 a year, but under its new contract with the RSPCA this will almost triple to \$328,632 in the next financial year**.

The following year it will rise to \$413,016 and by 2020-21 it will be around \$425,000.

This is getting close to half a million dollars a year to run the pound and, it appears, the cost will only keep rising.

So while it might be \$70 to register your dog next year, by 2020-21 it could feasibly be \$100.

There is no doubt it is expensive to humanely care for and re-house animals and the RSPCA says it had little choice but to reflect this in its fees.

RSPCA Victoria Head of Operations, Tegan McPherson:

“Over the past two years, RSPCA Victoria has been carefully analysing every council pound contract we tender for, and submitting tenders with a pricing structure that reflects the true cost of caring for animals admitted from each municipality and shire.

This represents a change from our previous approach, which was to share the cost of care with councils.

We are committed to ensuring that we run every council pound contract on terms that enable us to provide outstanding animal welfare on a cost-neutral basis. This way, we can ensure our limited funds are best invested in reducing cruelty and neglect, and cutting the number of surrendered and homeless animals right across Victoria.”

So what is the answer here?

Do we keep upping the fees and fines in Warrnambool each year to cover what will soon be a half million dollar a year operation, or do we look at this problem more broadly, and find other ways to encourage registration and de-sexing?



Recycling is no longer seen as a long-term solution to our growing waste problem, as international markets dry up. Image: ABC Radio

At the moment, it seems, those who do register their pets will be seriously subsidising those who don't: animal registrations will bring in \$270,000 this financial year and, with the fee increase, \$445,000 in the next.

I can't help but see the parallels between our seeming inability – as a wider community – to value animals enough to ensure they don't end up producing litters of unwanted offspring or not getting a dog that we have no time to train, or buying a kitten that is ignored once it grows into a cat...and our producing increasing tonnes of garbage.

In both cases, we expect someone else to deal with what we discard.

Recently there has been a lot of talk about the recycling crisis and China refusing to take our recyclable plastics and paper.

To be precise, China has refused to take recyclables that are even slightly contaminated (ie.mixed in with other stuff).

But the question remains as to why we would want to keep relying on China, or any other country, to keep taking our waste? If they pull the pin, what do we do then?

The answer, which some states are taking more seriously than others, is to no longer see recycling as the God of waste management, but to stop the waste being produced in the first place.



Plastics are flooding our oceans and need to be stopped at the source by changing manufacturing and consumer habits.
Image: Good Will Nurdle Hunting/Tangaroa Blue

THE WCC put out its [waste management strategy](#) last December, which reflects this idea and covers everything from reducing plastic bags to the simple act of picking up your dog's poop. It will also shortly start a trial of the organics composting service, FOGO, which is already up and running in Moyne Shire and Bendigo and elsewhere.

As the wheels grind slowly within government, the good news is that good stuff continues to happen at a grassroots, community level.

Colleen Hughson, who I wrote about recently in a piece on [the plastic pollution spill at Shelly Beach](#), is now part of a

project involving the global environmental group Tangaroa Blue, and others, to look at the plastics turning up on our local beaches.

A series of public workshops will be held in Warrnambool and Portland from later this month to talk about where the plastics are coming from, and how we can help stop it at the source. You can find out [how to get involved here](#).

Tackling environmental waste and animal welfare issues is not new, but the dramatic fee rises we are seeing at a local level provides a serious wake-up call that we all need to get involved with finding the solutions – or expect to pay a price.

** Less than half of Moyne's ratepayers use the garbage collection due to their remote locations. The higher cost compared to WCC reflects a wide geographic area with fewer customers.*

*** Moyne Shire used to share the cost of the WCC pound but, following a request from WCC to contribute significantly more from 2018-19, is now using the Southern Grampians Shire pound.*

10 good reasons why we must say no to horses and dogs



By Carol Altmann

Why horses and dogs don't belong in the conservation and conservation/recreation zones that will stretch from Killarney Beach to Warrnambool:

1. At least 54 species of "conservation significance" live there, including five listed as critically endangered, particularly the Orange Bellied Parrot, 10 listed as endangered, 20 as vulnerable, and 16 listed as threatened. (draft report p86-87)
2. There WILL be a negative impact on these species. Not "perhaps" or "maybe": there WILL be a negative impact that reduces their chances of thriving or even surviving. (p29, p33, p34-35)
3. The traditional owners of this country have made it very clear that they do not support racehorse training in the reserve. (p22, p64)
4. Racehorse training at Levy's Beach WILL cause damage to Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in this area and any artefacts will have to be removed and stored before it begins*. (p64)

5. Horse training WILL cause erosion**. Not perhaps or maybe: it WILL.

6. Every coastal plan for this area in the past 40 years has emphasised the need for MORE protection, not less. This includes the W'Bool City Council's own Warrnambool Coastal Management Plan, signed off just four years ago.

7. It ignores the Land Conservation Council framework set down for this area in 1978, knowing it would come under increased pressures. As a result of the LCC, the majority of public land in the area was officially set aside in 1979 as a conservation reserve. The LCC emphasises low-impact recreation, conservation and protection. (p83)

8. There are no numbers on exactly how many racehorses would use the most sensitive areas of Levy's Point, Golfies and Rutledge's Cutting. (p63-64)

9. Monitoring this area is already difficult because of its isolation.

The area already suffers erosion and damage caused by illegal activities. (p61)

How will the WCC, Vic Police and Parks Vic have the time and resources to monitor it in the future?

10. The bottom line? Commercial racehorse training is not recreation and it is not conservation. This is not anti-horseracing, it is just fact.

Please have your say on the draft management plan for Belfast Coastal Reserve, by March 16, here: www.engage.vic.gov.au/belfast

* The full extent of Indigenous artefacts and cultural sites in this area is not known due to either out-dated or insufficient data. The plan says more studies need to be done.

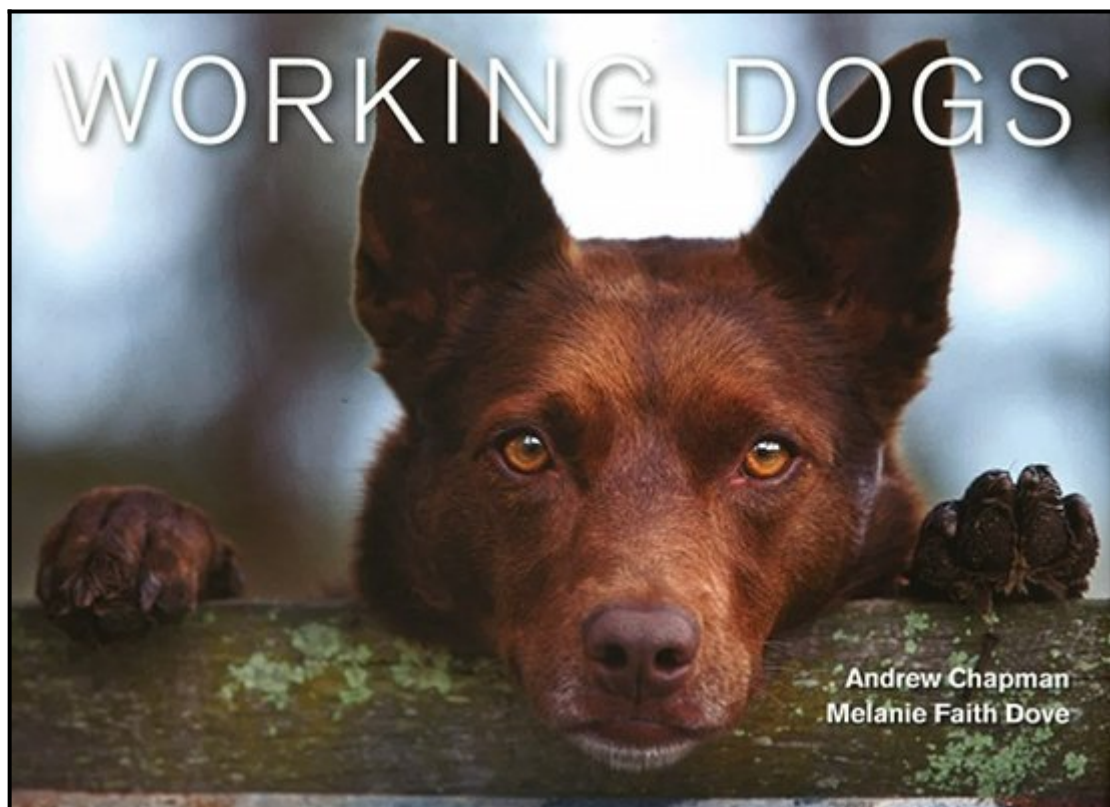
** There also needs to be more studies into the full impact of

horses on beaches, but two referred to in the draft report (p80-81) confirm that horses cause erosion. Here is part of the summary from a 2001 study of horse riding in D'Entrecasteaux National Park, WA:

“Horse riding altered plant species composition, increased the area of bare ground and decreased height and cover of vegetation. Significant impacts occurred after only low levels of horse use. The findings indicate the need for a database on horse riding impact in Australia so that, where horse riding is allowed, impacts can be properly assessed and effectively managed.”

<http://www.publish.csiro.au/pc/PC020256>

Working like a dog...



Hello, it is Barney Bluestone here (one of the two Bluestone cocker spaniels).

Normally the two-legged people in the household write these introductions to Bookmarks, but this week it is my turn because it is a book about DOGS!

Most people think that dogs don't like to read and that only cats read (especially newspapers; cats just LOVE newspapers), but where do you think the term dog-eared pages came from?

That's right – from us dogs trying to turn the pages with our big old paws.

But I digress.

This is a wonderful book: it is full of gorgeous dogs and their stories. I am giving it four-paws.



Michaelie Clark from **Warrnambool Books** will now tell you why it is almost certain to be a best seller:

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] A [dropcap]ward-winning Australian photographer, **Andrew Chapman**, has teamed up with fellow photographer, **Melanie Faith Dove**, to create *Working Dogs*, a spectacular tribute to the cleverest and most colourful canine characters of the countryside.

The book features unique and captivating photographs of man's best friend, both hard at work and in more playful moments, with accompanying snippets of text to provide background and complement the atmosphere of the photos.

While focused mainly on Smithfields, Koolies, Heelers, Kelpies and Collies, the book also includes a section dedicated to

‘The Wannabes’ – the Pugs, Jack Russells and other small or ‘funny looking’ dogs on the farming frontline, who are no less important or enthusiastic in their endeavours, but who contribute more to light relief than the serious business of making a living on the land (though they may think otherwise at times).

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] A [/dropcap]s with Chapman’s *Woolsheds* and *Around the Sheds*, the photographs have been taken in various locations around the country, including several areas in South-West Victoria, such as Bushfield, Merino, Darlington, Port Fairy and Casterton.

(I am inspired! I think I may have to pen a book called “Work? Work? A cocker spaniel guide to doing nothing and getting away with it”. – Barney).

Please visit Warrnambool Books on [Facebook](#) for regular updates on new releases.