

Injured Wildlife Service



Issues and Options

May 2019

Issues



- Workplace risk associated with the service
- Financial cost of the service
- Increasing demand for service
- Safety issues related to provision of service and management of firearms
- Road safety impact if the service is not provided
- The service acts as a blocker to reintroduction of broader Community Safety after hours (domestic animal management) service by staff

Background



Scope of review

- Benchmark service across Local Government sector
- Identify and address key issues related to the service
- Assess options available for service
- Identify and assess opportunity to review extent of service
- Engage with partner organisations
- Determine resourcing requirements
- Determine best outcome for service

Background to review

- Service has been provided since 1994 (Amalgamations)
- Audit of service carried out by PPB Advisory in 2018
- Audit identified service as high risk at the time
- PPB Audit and Audit Committee recommended exiting the service
- Officers have previously recommended council exit the service

Current Service



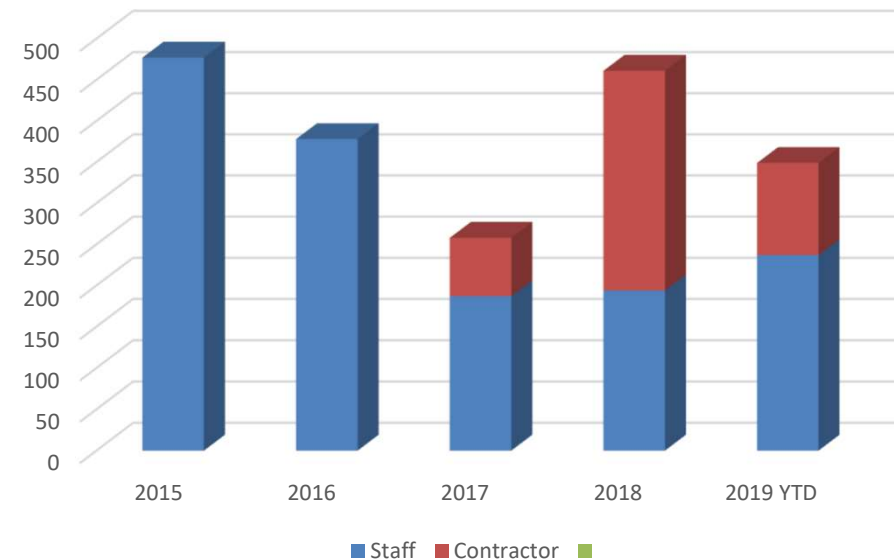
- Service provided on public and private Land.
- 52% / 48% split between public/private service requests
- In 2017 following a number of incidents involving the after-hours service, management engaged a contractor to carry out the service after hours
- 2018 (Calendar year) cost of service was \$73,876, made up of \$56,000 for after hours contractor and \$17,276 in officer costs
- 2019 (Calendar Year) first quarter cost of service \$32,804, made up of \$15,500 for after hours contractor and \$17,304 in officer costs
- On average, it costs \$94 per service request for Council staff to attend (1-up), and \$200 per service request for the contractor to attend (1-up)
- There are 11 registered wildlife groups operating within Nillumbik, primarily as carers, and Victoria Police also support the management of wildlife

Current Service



- Average 393 service requests per year for past 5 years
- A total of 465 service requests in 2018, 42% during business hours and 58% after hours
- First quarter of 2019 has seen 349 service requests 67% during business hours and 33% after hours
- Summer and Autumn are generally peak period for the service, with reduced service requests in winter and spring
- Increased incidents in 2019 likely related to lack of food available for wildlife
- 52% of service requests are located on public land and 48% are located on private land
- Approximately 70% of after hours service requests occur between 4AM and 8:30AM

INJURED WILDLIFE SERVICE REQUESTS

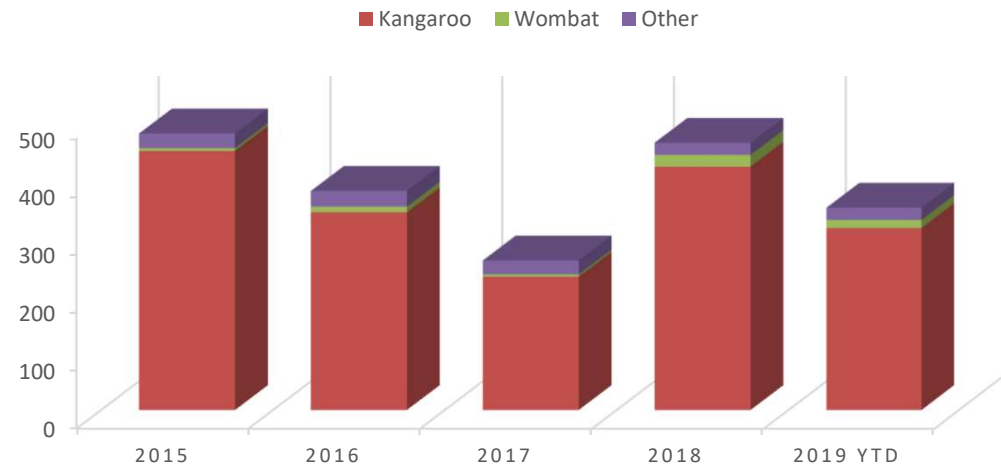


Current Service



- 90% of service requests are for injured Kangaroos
- Smaller number associated with Wallabies, Wombats and Deer.
- A small percentage of callouts are associated with animals that are sick (such as Wombats afflicted with mange) rather than injured through vehicle incidents

INJURED WILDLIFE BY SPECIES



Benchmarking



- 79 Councils surveyed, 27 rural and semi rural Councils responded
- 74% of respondents do not provide an injured wildlife service
- 7 respondents (26%) do provide an injured wildlife service. Of the 7 respondents, the following key measures were identified:
 - Average injured wildlife attended to was 16 per year
 - Only 2 other councils attend to wildlife on private property, both on very rare occasions (less than 3/year)
 - Only 3 provide the service after hours, and only if there is a road hazard
 - Of respondents who attend private land, 100% do so during business hours only
 - Of respondents who provide a service, 42% require staff to attend two-up
- No respondents provide the service to the extent Nillumbik does (24hrs/day on both private and public land)

Options for service



SERVICE OPTIONS

Exit Service

- Cease to provide service at all
- Undertake discussions with other service providers
- Potential to provide support to volunteer organisations

Outsource service

- Continued service to community by contracted service 24/7
- Option to consider reduced scope of service
- Limited opportunity to procure a contractor

Bring Service in house

- Continued service to community by Council
- Additional resources (staff) required
- Increased fixed costs
- Management of workplace risk, particularly after hours

Broadly continue as is

- Continued service to community by Council
- Use of staff during hours and contractor after hours
- Ability to vary scope of service

Review scope of service

- Options available to review scope of service
 - Limit hours of service
 - Cease/limit service on private property
 - Alternate methods (bolt guns)

Assessment Criteria



Risk

Management

- Workplace safety
- Community Safety
- Road Safety
- Firearms management
- Reputational risk

Financial

Outcomes

- Responsible use of resources
- Sustainable financial management

Service

Provision

- Reduced ability to provide broader animal management service

Animal Welfare

- Reduced time of suffering

Community Perception

- Loss of service
- Timely, safe and responsive

Partner

Organisations

- Ability to provide service
- resourcing

Staff

- Qualifications, training and experience
- Workplace safety

Contractors

- Qualifications, training and experience
- Workplace safety
- Ability to control outcomes

Assessment matrix



	Exit Service	Outsource service	Bring Service in house	Broadly continue as is
Risk Management	✓	✓	✓	✓
Financial Outcomes	✓	✓	X	✓
Service Provision	X	✓	✓	✓
Animal Welfare	X	✓	✓	✓
Community Perception	X	✓	✓	✓
Partner Organisations	X	✓	✓	✓
Staff	✓	✓	X	✓
Contractors	N/A	✓	N/A	✓
	Reject	Consider	Consider	Consider

Options to review scope of Service



Limit hours of service

- Potential to reduce the service to dawn till dusk (or alternate timeframe)
- After hours service can be limited to highest risk periods, particularly between 4AM and 8:30AM (ie prior to and after dawn and dusk)
- Provides ability to reduce overall afterhours costs
- The after hours contractor attends to 70% of service requests between 4AM and 8:30AM

Consider

Cease/limit service on private property

- 48% of service requests located on private property
- Considerable financial savings and ability to reallocate resources
- The only service Council accepts responsibility on behalf of a landowner
- Would lead to animals suffering due to reduced service provision
- Animal Welfare Victoria (State Government) and legal advice indicates that the Local Government Act and POCTA do not automatically authorise officers to enter private property to carry out this service

Consider

Alternate methods (bolt guns)

- Only valid for animals that are not moving – can only be discharged in close proximity
- Significant risk to staff/contractors if animals are mobile
- Reduced ability to render assistance to moving animals

Reject

Recommendations



- That Council continue to provide the Injured Wildlife Euthanisation Service
- That Council continue to review and implement the most appropriate service model for the delivery of the service.
- That Council investigate options to reduce the scope of the service to key high volume times (daytime hours and prior to dawn and immediately after dusk)
- Advocate to the State Government for support in the management of the service in Nillumbik and for the delivery of an injured wildlife euthanisation service

Response to key issues



- Considerable effort has been put into introducing measures since the PPB Audit was carried out to respond to areas of identified risk. There is still a need to respond to staff safety through ability to resource a 2-up service where required
- Officers to continue to work with Victoria Police to ensure implementation of best practice management of firearms
- Recommended option limits financial cost to continue the service
- Contracted after hours service removes staff risk in utilising firearms alone after hours at night
- Use of after hours contractor allows flexibility in resourcing service to align with demand. Limited fixed additional costs