

Management of Feral and/or Infant Animals Policy

1 Purpose

It is a requirement of the Companion Animals Act 1998 (here after referred to as “The Act”), that a person who seizes a Companion Animal under the provisions of The Act, must cause the seized animal to be returned to its owner, delivered to a Council pound, or surrender the animal to an Authorised Council Officer within a reasonable time. The Act then provides for procedures in dealing with the animals including statutory holding periods.

In some cases the animals which are seized are either feral and in other cases an infant animal of such a young age that it cannot support its own life and ultimately dies or is euthanased.

In these cases the Companion Animals Act Section 64(2) requires Council to have a policy which provides a clear direction on how these animals are to be dealt with, including euthanasia and alternatives to euthanasia where it is considered cruel to keeping the animal caged for any nominated statutory period.

2 Policy

2.1 Objective

Section 64(2) of the Act indicates that feral and infant companion animals may be destroyed prior to the expiration of the standard holding period in accordance with any adopted Council policy. The standard holding period is as set out in Section 64(1) of the Act and currently stands at 7 days for unidentified animals and 14 days for identified animals.

It will be the objective of this policy to authorise the humane euthanasia of feral or infant companion animals prior to the standard holding period under certain circumstances and, to provide alternatives to euthanasia of infant animals under certain circumstances, which in the past may not have survived.

2.2 Feral animals

- Animals accepted into Council’s pound facility suspected of being feral must be assessed by either a senior staff member of that pound facility, an Authorised Officer of Council or a vet;
- Should the animal be deemed as feral and reasonable investigations into its identification have been made, and it is considered cruel to keep the animal caged for the statutory holding period, the animal may be euthanased.

2.3 Infant animals

Animals accepted into Council’s pound facility which are identified as being infant animals are to be assessed by either a senior member of that pound facility, Authorised Officer of Council or a vet.

Should the infant animal be of such a size and age that survival in the long term would be remote, euthanasia is authorised under this policy.

Should the infant animal be of such size and age that survival is possible through intensive care external of the pound, or it is in the best interest of the infant animal to warrant early release then

Council authorises the release of the infant as an alternative to euthanasia, subject to the early release conditions as outlined within this policy.

2.4 Early release as an alternative to euthanasia:

Companion animals identified as being an Infant may be released on a permanent basis prior to the expiration of the statutory holding period as an alternative to euthanasia, or on the basis that such action is in the best interests of the animal's welfare.

Early release is subject only to the animal being released to the following organisations:

- Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals NSW.
- Any animal rescue organisation approved by the Chief Executive, Local Government, NSW under clause 16 (d) of the Companion Animals Regulation.

2.5 Euthanasia

- Euthanasia must only be considered after reasonable consideration has been given to alternatives.
- Euthanasia must be carried out in accordance with industry standards and meet the requirements of Codes Of Practice which may be written from time to time.

3 Definitions

Feral Animal: Means a dog or cat:

- Whose owner is unidentified and has been living as a wild animal in undomesticated circumstances and,
- Demonstrates such wild behaviour that handling the animal would pose a risk to staff and be seen as cruel to keep the animal caged for any length of time than deemed necessary.

Infant Animal: Means a dog or cat in the first period of existence and refers to an animal that is not able to feed and fend for itself or is of such age that keeping it within a pound facility would place the animal's welfare at risk.

Unidentified Animal: Means a dog or cat that has no form of identification contained on its being, such as a microchip or collar and tag containing owners details.

4 Key Responsibilities

Position	Directorate	Responsibility
Mayor	Council	To lead councillors in their understanding of, and compliance with, this policy and guidelines.
General Manager	Executive	To lead staff (either directly or through delegated authority) in their understanding of, and compliance with, this policy and guidelines.
Directors	All Directorates	To communicate, implement and comply with this policy and related guidelines.
Executive and Managers	All Directorates	To implement this policy and related procedures.
Authorised Council Officers and Contractors	City Planning	To comply with this policy and related procedures.

5 References (laws, standards and other Council documents)

- Companion Animals Act 1998
- Companion Animals Regulation 2008.

6 Details of Approval and revision

- Approval date: 22/06/2017
- Responsible Section: Compliance and Regulatory Enforcement
- Superseded policies/procedures:
- Next review date: 22/06/2021

Table of amendments

Amendment	Authoriser	Approval ref	Date