

POLICY NAME

Feral and infant animals policy

DATE ADOPTED

18 September 2010

ECM NUMBER

3855821

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June 2020

RELATED DOCUMENTS

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POLICY NUMBER

EH 007

COUNCIL MINUTE NUMBER

PRC 96

POLICY TYPE

Council

RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT

Environmental Health & Compliance

Purpose

Feral animals pose a serious threat to the natural and built environment, conservation of biodiversity and sustainability of natural ecosystems, whilst posing a further threat to resident welfare and safety. Council acknowledges feral animals inhabit areas of the Penrith Local Government Area.

This policy:

- Aims to reduce such impacts and to assist Council's responsible animal management systems
- Covers animals impounded by Council's Animal Services Team
- Complies with Section 64 and 64A of the Companion Animals Act 1998

Animals that are seized or captured by an authorised Council Officer or members of the public are transported to an authorised facility.

Feral animals are usually received at authorised facilities in poor condition. They are difficult to handle and are not suitable to be re-homed. Caging Feral animals causes stress on the animal. Infant animals require vast amounts of resources to raise and have a low resistance to diseases.

This Policy complies with Section 64 and 64A of the Companion Animals Act 1998.

Policy Statement

Council acknowledges feral animals (such as dogs and cats) inhabit areas of the Penrith Local Government Area. These animals cause environmental, social and economic impacts within the community.

Scope

This policy applies to Council and local residents.

1. Feral Animal Management Strategies

Council will develop and implement integrated strategies to reduce the environmental, social and economic impacts of feral animals in the Local Government Area. Council aims to manage and control populations of feral animals through a cooperative approach with other agencies and land owners.

The strategies will be cost effective and develop actions and performance measures for the desired policy outcomes. Strategies will be regularly reviewed and adaptive management approach used for their implementation.

2. Environmental Impacts

Council will take active measures to protect the flora and fauna habitats from the threat of feral animals. Control programs will be targeted in areas of greatest conservation value, such as where threatened species are affected. Council will adopt the most appropriate techniques and take action to control feral animals on land it manages.

3. Economic and Social Impacts

Council will take active measures to reduce the economic and social cost of feral animals to the community. Control programs will be developed to control feral animal populations in areas where damage to both public and private property is affected.

4. Public Safety

Council will take actions to reduce the danger and health risks to the community associated with feral animals on roadways, public places and Council managed land.

5. Community Education

Council will continue to research and gather information on the impact of feral animals and their control through active involvement with other agencies.

Council will promote a better understanding of feral issues among the community through the use of fact sheets, Council websites, presentations and providing information for media releases.

6. Collection and Management of Data

Council will keep a record of customer requests. Council will collect information through surveys and the Information Management System on the number, distribution and impacts of feral animals in the community and utilise the data to make informed decisions on feral animal management.

7. Customer Response

Council will provide a consistent response to customer requests regarding feral animals. Council will liaise with other agencies including the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Rural Lands Protection Board, NSW Police and Department of Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources to ensure unified and up-to-date information is provided.

Definitions

- a. Companion Animal – means dog or cat.
- b. Feral – means wild, or existing in a state of nature and showing no signs of domestication.
- c. Companion Animals that are wearing a collar, identification tag or micro chipped MUST NOT be deemed Feral.
- d. Infant - means in the first period of existence and refers to an animal that is not able to feed and fend for itself.

Procedures

1. Observe and assess the behaviour of the animal or companion animal captured or received from the public to determine if they are Feral or Infant.
 2. Follow the procedure set out below:
 - a. **Procedure for companion animal deemed Feral**
 - Receive the animal noting the animal was deemed Feral
 - b. **Procedure for companion animal deemed Infant**
 - Receive the animal noting the animal was an Infant
- Options to consider prior to euthanasia:**
- Is there a rescue organisation that may take the animal for rearing
 - Is there a compatible lactating animal within the animal holding facility that could “adopt” and care for the infant
 - Does the animal appear to be in good health
3. Feral or Infant animals be euthanased prior to the end of any required holding period as determined by the Companion Animals Act 1998.

History

Feral animals are generally received at the Animal Holding Facility in a poor condition, are difficult to handle and accommodate and are not suitable to be rehomed. Caging feral animals causes stress on the animal. Infant animals require vast amounts of resources and time to raise and have a low resistance to diseases.

This policy complies with Section 64 and 64A of the Companion Animals Act 1998.