

## **POLICY OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this policy is to provide a mechanism to deal with animals which are feral and a danger for Council staff to handle and/or infant animals which need constant intensive care prior to the expiration of the standard holding period under the Companion Animals Act.

## **SCOPE**

This policy applies to companion animals that are suspected of being feral and/or being an infant.

## **LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

Companion animals are managed under the Companion Animals Act 1998 (the Act) and Companion Animals Regulation 2008 (the Regulation) and makes provision for the management of companion animals that are suspected of being feral and/or being an infant.

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 the Council pound, or surrender the animal to an authorised officer of Council within a reasonable time. The Act then provides for procedures in dealing with the animals including statutory holding periods under section 64(1).

In some cases, the animal which has been seized are feral and/or an infant animal is of such a young age that it cannot support its own life and the Act provides that Council may have a policy which provides a clear direction on how these animals are to be dealt with, including euthanasia, alternatives to euthanasia or where it is considered cruel to keep the animal caged for any nominated statutory period as defined in the Act.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

### **Feral Companion Animals**

Companion animals accepted into Council's Animal Shelter suspected of being feral must be assessed by Council's Ranger or a veterinarian. The results of the assessment must be documented and signed off by Council's Ranger or a veterinarian to validate that the animal is assessed as a 'feral'.

Should the animal be deemed as a '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 under the Act, Council authorises that the animal may be euthanised prior to the standard statutory holding period.

### **Infant Companion Animals**

Companion animals accepted into Council's Animal Shelter identified as being infant animals must be assessed by either Council's Ranger or a veterinarian. The results of the assessment must be documented and signed off by Council's Ranger or a veterinarian to validate that the animal is assessed as an 'infant'. Should the infant animal be of such a size and age that survival in the long term would be remote, then Council authorises its euthanasia under this Policy.

Should the infant animal be of such a size and age that survival is possible through intensive care external of Council's Animal Shelter or, it is in the best interests 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 outlined in this Policy.

If suitable alternatives to euthanasia are not available at the time, then Council authorises the euthanasia of the infant companion animal.

**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 in the best interests for the welfare of the animal.

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

- Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals NSW (RSPCA);
- Animal Welfare League; and/or
- Animal Rescue Organisation accredited with regulation 16(d) authorisation (as defined in the Companion Animals Regulation 2008).

**ASSOCIATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Nil.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Council pound facility:** Includes any pound facility operated by Council or Council’s contracted service provider.

**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 considered cruel to keep the animal caged for a longer length of time than deemed necessary.

**Infant animal:** Means a dog or cat in the first stage 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 or in its body being a microchip or collar and tag containing owner’s details.

**POLICY VERSION CONTROL**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Management of Feral and /or Infant Animals Policy</b>			
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