



November 2022

LEMA Appendix 8 Animal Welfare Plan



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Overview

National Planning Principles for Animals in Disasters

The community has an expectation that emergency plans will allow for a coordinated approach to the management of animal welfare impacts to companion animals, livestock and wildlife. The failure to integrate animals into this planning may result in unacceptable economic and social costs, including loss of human life.

- **Animals have intrinsic value**

As sentient beings, animals suffer in disasters from injury, pain, hunger, thirst, fear and distress. On the basis of animal welfare principles alone, efforts should be made to protect animals from disasters

- **Animals contribute to human health and wellbeing**

The link between human wellbeing and interaction with animals is well documented. A survey of New Zealand residents found that almost two-thirds believe their relationship with their pet is vital to their psychosocial wellbeing

Following Cyclone Tracey, animals were flown out of Darwin while the infrastructure was repaired. Residents reported that the return of their animals was critical to their recovery following the disaster.

- **Animals have economic value**

Whilst there is no comprehensive database of the livestock losses incurred in disasters, available data suggests that the direct costs of livestock losses are considerable. For example, the 1983 Ash Wednesday fires resulted in an estimated total gross output loss of more than \$65 million. A decrease in production in the agriculture sector also results in downstream production losses for agriculture-dependent industries. These downstream impacts have been estimated to result in a total economic loss some 2.4 times greater than that experienced by the agricultural industry alone

- **Failure to account for animals puts human life at risk**

The Royal Commission into the Black Saturday fires found that individuals perished as a result of failing to evacuate with their animals and prematurely returning to the fire ground in order to save their animals.

Guiding Principles

The development and implementation of this plan are underpinned by the following guiding principles:

1. At all times the responsibility for the welfare of an animal remains with the owner or person in charge of the animal.
2. The protection and preservation of human life will always take priority over the welfare and/or safety of an animal.
3. The connection people have with their animals may affect their decision making and behaviour in an emergency.
4. Integrating the consideration of animals and their welfare into emergency planning will improve animal welfare outcomes during and following an emergency, and will have a positive impact on human safety and resilience.

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1.0 Amendment Record

| Number | Date | Details of Amendment | Author |
|--------|------------|---|---------------------|
| 1 | 26/10/2022 | Clause 4.4.1 amended to better reflect DPIRD's role in emergency management | Emily Lewis - DPIRD |
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Feedback from Stakeholders will help to improve and ensure the accuracy and effectiveness of the Animal Welfare Plan. Feedback and suggestions should be forwarded to:

Ranger & Emergency Services Coordinator
City of Busselton
Locked Bag 1
BUSSELTON WA 6280

Or via email to: city@busselton.wa.gov.au

To access electronic copies of the following State Emergency Management or other reference documents please go to the SEMC website www.semc.wa.gov.au or select the following links

- [State Support Plans - Animal Welfare in Emergencies](#)
- [National Planning Principles for Animals in Disasters](#)

2.0 Glossary of Terms

Animal Care Facility (ACF): the City's nominated Dog and Cat Management Facility (Pound), located at 306 Queen Elizabeth Avenue, Vasse.

Animal Welfare: the World Organisation for Animal Health defines animal welfare as how an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives. An animal is in a good state of welfare if (as indicated by scientific evidence) it is healthy, comfortable, well-nourished, safe, able to express innate behaviour, and if it is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear and distress.

Assistance Animal: section 9 of the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* sets out the legal definition of an [assistance animal](#) as a dog or other animal that:

- (a) is accredited under a State or Territory law to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effects of disability; or
- (b) is accredited by an animal training organisation prescribed in the regulations; or
- (c) is trained to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effects of the disability and meets standards of hygiene and behaviour that are appropriate for an animal in a public place.

Companion Animal (pets): a domesticated or domestic-bred animal, usually a dog or a cat, whose physical, emotional, behavioural and social needs can be readily met as a companion in the home, or in close daily relationship with humans.

Livestock: any animal kept for the purposes of primary production including cattle (cows), sheep, goats, pigs, and horses, including where used for recreation.

Unowned Animal: an animal will be deemed to be unowned if its owner cannot be readily identified (via animal registration, microchipping or identity/name tag), or if its owner is identified they are not able to be contacted. These animals will usually be impounded to the ACF if found wandering unless they are injured.

Wildlife: all native and introduced animals that live without regular human intervention or support (this does not include stray domestic animals).

3.0 Introduction

3.1 Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to provide guidance to the City, emergency services, and emergency management agencies about the care and management of domestic and native animals during an emergency incident within the City of Busselton.

Arrangements or resources outlined in this plan may also be used to support neighbouring local government authorities during emergencies in their district, or emergencies that cross boundaries between one or more local governments that abut the City of Busselton.

3.2 Objectives

The objectives of the plan are to:

- (a) increase community resilience and preparedness by encouraging owners to include animals in their emergency management plans and planning;
- (b) provide a framework and resources that consider the management and welfare of animals during and immediately following an emergency;
- (c) identify facilities where animals may be temporarily housed during and immediately following an emergency; and
- (d) provide a process that facilitates reuniting animals with their owners during and immediately following an emergency.

3.3 Scope

This plan will consider the welfare and management of companion animals (pets), livestock and wildlife. It recognises that whilst the ultimate responsibility for the welfare of pets and livestock rests with the owner, and the welfare of wildlife (native animals) rests with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (Parks and Wildlife Services), the City has a role to play in supporting the community and Parks and Wildlife Services where it can.

Nothing in this plan is intended to override the guiding principle that the protection and preservation of human life will always take priority over the welfare and/or safety of an animal.

3.4 Activation of the Plan

The City's Ranger Services Coordinator or Local Recovery Coordinator will activate the plan in consultation with the Hazard Management Agency, Local Emergency Coordinator, or Incident Controller.

Major emergencies such as fire, flood, storm or animal disease may be triggers for activating all or part of the plan. Where there is a need to open a welfare/recovery centre it is likely arrangements will need to be made to temporarily house evacuees' pets.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Animal Welfare Contacts List

The Animal Welfare Contacts List provides contact details for various government, non-government and volunteer organisation that may be involved in the management, care or welfare of animals during an emergency. The contacts list forms part of the Emergency Contacts, Resource and Critical Infrastructure Directory, Appendix 4 of the City's LEMA.

4.2 City of Busselton

4.2.1 Ranger Services Coordinator

The Ranger Services Coordinator is responsible for the implementation and management of this plan.

4.2.2 Rangers

As well as carrying out their normal duties, Rangers may provide support to government and non-government animal welfare agencies; and would assist with the reunification of companion animals with their owners.

During an emergency incident Rangers may also be used to provide logistical support to Emergency Services and as such, their services as availability could be limited. Non-urgent/routine requests for Ranger Services may not be attended for the duration of the incident.

4.2.3 Ranger Services Administration

The City's Ranger Services Administration Team provide specialist support and advice to Ranger Operational Team Members, and the community. During an emergency, the focus of this team would be the immediate response to customer enquiries regarding animal welfare matters. Following the emergency, the R&ES Admin Team would assist with community recovery efforts including the resolution of enquiries relating to lost and found animals.

4.3 Animal Owners

Owners of animals, including livestock and companion animals, have overall responsibility for the welfare, management and control of their animals at all times including during emergency events.

4.4 State Government Agencies

The following State Government Agencies have animal welfare responsibilities and may provide support to the community and the City during and following an incident.

4.4.1 Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD)

Under State Emergency Management Arrangements, [DPIRD \(Agriculture and Food\)](#) is the Hazard Management Agency Animal and Plant Biosecurity and plays a role in coordinating animal welfare for other hazard emergencies including bushfires, cyclones and floods.

4.4.2 Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA)

[DBCA \(Parks and Wildlife Service\)](#) has a key role in protecting our [native animals](#) and does so through the management of lands and waters reserved under the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*.

The [Wildcare Helpline](#) (9754 9055) is a telephone referral service operated by volunteers on behalf of Parks and Wildlife Services. The helpline provides a service to the public who find sick or injured native wildlife and are seeking advice on where to find care for the animal.

4.5 Non-Government Agencies Businesses and Community Groups

The following non-government agencies, businesses and community groups provide a mix of animal welfare, rescue, and other services. Whilst some of these groups are run by volunteers and provide their services free of charge, others operate as a business and as such, charge a fee for their services. It is the responsibility of the animal owner to be aware of and to pay for these services.

4.5.1 Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)

The [RSPCA](#) is an independent, non-government community based charity providing animal care and protection services. Their mission is to prevent cruelty to animals by actively promoting their care and protection. The RSPCA Cruelty Hotline (1300 278 589) is a telephone referral service for all matters relating to animal welfare.

4.5.2 Veterinary Practices and Hospitals

The following veterinary practices serve the City of Busselton and may be able to provide a level of support to the City and the community during and following an emergency:

- [Busselton Vet Hospital](#)
- [Cattle Veterinary Services](#)
- [Dunsborough Veterinary Hospital](#)
- [Geo Vet](#)
- [Heritage Vets Veterinary Hospital](#)
- [Lifestyle Vets](#)
- [Naturaliste Veterinary Services](#)
- [Vasse Vets](#)

The cost to treat injured animals is the sole responsibility of the owner of the animal. All efforts will be made by the veterinary practice to identify the owner to discuss treatment and costs prior to carrying out that treatment. The City will assist, where it can, to identify and contact animal owners on behalf of veterinary practices.

The decision on whether or not to treat injured animals where the owner is not able to be identified or cannot be contacted will rest with the treating veterinary practice. The City will record the details of these animals in its **Found Animals Register** so that if an owner comes forward, they can be notified (even if the animal is deceased).

4.5.3 Kennels and Catteries

The following is a list of licenced kennels and catteries operating within the City of Busselton that may be able to provide temporary housing for dogs and cats:

- [Ambergate Cat Hostel](#)
- [Marlee Country Kennels](#)
- [Silver Tree Cat Boarding](#)
- Southern Meadows Boarding Kennels

- [Ticketyboo Dog Boarding Kennels](#)

The housing of animals at any of these facilities is a commercial arrangement between the animal owner and the business (animal owners may be required to provide proof of vaccination for their pet).

4.5.4 Pet Cremation Services

The loss of family pets during a significant emergency is inevitable. The City will dispose of animal remains with dignity at one of its waste facilities where ownership of the animal has not been determined (through registration, microchipping or name tags).

Where the owner of a pet has been identified, and the City has collected the remains, the owner may choose to have their animal privately cremated through a pet crematorium. The cost of the cremation is a commercial arrangement between the pet owner and the crematorium.

The following pet crematoriums provide services within the City of Busselton:

- [Rainbow Bay Pet Cremation Services](#)
- [Lawnswood Pet Cremation](#)
- [Passing Paws Pet Cremation](#)
- [South West Pet Cremations](#)

4.5.5 Public Equestrian Facilities (Horses)

The following is a list of equestrian facilities that may be able to provide assistance/temporary agistment for horses during an emergency incident:

- [Busselton Horse and Pony Club](#)
- [Capel Horse and Pony Club](#)
- [Margaret River Horse & Pony Club](#)

5.0 Facilities and Resources

5.1 Animal Welfare Coordination Centre

The functions of the Animal Welfare Coordination Centre (AWCC) are to:

- (a) provide public information, through the City's Media and Public Relations section, regarding animal welfare matters;
- (b) record, register and prioritise all requests for assistance;
- (c) record and register all reports of lost, found, rescued and impounded animals;
- (d) assist with the logistics of caring for all impounded animals; and
- (e) maintain financial and administrative records.

Depending on the size of the incident, the AWCC will either be administered through the City's Ranger Services Administration Team, or be a function of the Disaster Recovery Room located in the Koorup Meeting Room at 2 Southern Drive, Busselton.

5.2 Animal Sheltering Facilities

Animal sheltering facilities are intended to provide short-term, temporary housing for rescued and impounded animals. **Animals will not be permitted inside an evacuation/welfare centre unless it is an assistance dog** as prescribed in section 8 of the *Dog Act 1976*, or any other assistance animal that meets the [legal definition](#) shown in the glossary of terms for this plan.

5.3 Animal Care Facility (Pound)

The City's Animal Care Facility (ACF) is the primary animal sheltering facility for dogs and cats found wandering in an area impacted by the emergency incident. Animals can be dropped off at the ACF by appointment, or alternatively Rangers may collect the animals if they adequately contained (cats need to be confined in an appropriate carrier or box before collection).

The City may also agree to temporarily house dogs and cats whose owners have been displaced. The ACF can temporarily house up to 25 dogs, and 16 cats although there may be scope to increase the number of dogs temporarily housed where two dogs from the same household are able to share a single enclosure.

The City's ability to provide temporary housing will be dependent on available space (priority will be given to impounded cats and dogs). The maximum period an animal can be voluntarily housed at the ACF is 48 hours however, the City may extend this period on compassionate grounds.

At the discretion of the City, other companion animals (pets) that are suitably contained in an enclosure or tank may also be temporarily housed at the ACF. The owner of these animals will be required to provide food and instructions for the care of animals, other than cats and dogs, housed at the ACF.

Owners who request accommodation for their animal at the ACF will be required to complete the 'Animal Care Facility Temporary Housing & Release Form' at [Attachment 1](#).

There are no provisions for the keeping of horses, livestock or other farm animals at the ACF.

5.4 Injured Companion Animals

Injured companion animals are to be taken to a [licenced veterinary practice](#) for treatment. Where the veterinary practice is unable to identify the [owner](#) of the animal through either a microchip, registration or name tag the veterinary practice will contact the City with the details of the animal for inclusion in the Found Animal Register. The cost of treatment for injured animals will be the responsibility of the animal owner once they have been identified and contacted.

5.5 Livestock

Livestock found wandering are to be securely contained within the closest safe paddock where ideally, they will have access to feed and water and have room to exercise. When resources become available, all attempts should be made to identify and contact the owner through the National Livestock Identification System or the stock list managed by Ranger Services.

Where livestock are not claimed, arrangements may have to be made to relocate the animals to a more permanent holding facility. The Ranger Services Coordinator and/or Senior Ranger will assist by approaching land holders of suitable nearby properties and arranging the appropriate management of these animals for a longer period.

5.6 Temporary Housing of Livestock

The City has limited capacity for the temporary, short-term housing of livestock and horses at its Showgrounds, Churchill Park in Adelaide Street. There are approximately 50 livestock and small animal pens located in the Northeast corner of Churchill Park suitable for this purpose.

Owners temporarily housing their livestock at this facility will be responsible for the provision of feed and water, and for cleaning out the pens during and following their use. Pre-existing event bookings, such as the annual show or equestrian events, may impact the availability of the Showgrounds.

5.7 Horses

Although there are no formal arrangements in place, the City will liaise with [public equestrian facilities](#) if there is a need to seek temporary housing of horses during and emergency incident. The temporary housing of horses at these facilities will be a private arrangement between the horse owner and the equestrian facility.

5.8 Lost and Found Animal Registers

The City will maintains lost and found animal registers. These are managed by the Ranger Services Admin Team, and are located on the City's internal 'X' drive in the folder 'Ranger and Emergency Services/Lost Animals Register'.

Lost Animal Register

The Lost Animal Register is used to record the details of animals (dogs, cats and other) reported as lost. Prior to the details being added to the register as lost, the Found Animal Register is to be checked to determine if the animal has been found.

Found Animal Register

The Found Animal Register is used to record the details of animals (dogs, cats and other) that have been found and the owner has either not been identified, or has been identified but has not been located.

Found animals may include:

- (a) animals that have been injured and are at a local veterinary practice receiving treatment;
- (b) animals that have been found by a member of the public who has agreed to temporarily care for the animal;
- (c) animals that have been taken to the City's ACF; or
- (d) animals that have been found but are deceased.

Details of found animals (as classified at (a), (b) and (c) above) will be published on the City's website and social media so the animal and its owner may be reunited. Although the details of deceased animal will not be published on compassionate grounds, every effort will be made to identify and contact the owner of a deceased animal.

5.9 Impounded Cats and Dogs

Lost dogs and cats, where owner details have not been determined, will be deemed to have been impounded in accordance with the **Cat Act 2011** or **Dog Act 1976**. Animals impounded to the ACF will be managed as per the City's normal business practices with details being published on the City's website.

5.10 Temporary Foster Care

Where all other avenues of providing temporary housing for displaced animals (both companion and larger animals) are exhausted, the City may seek volunteers to provide temporary foster care during and immediately following an emergency. This will include a formal approach to Saving Animals from Euthanasia (SAFE) Busselton to determine if their pool of foster carers is available to assist.

Any costs associated with the provision of temporary foster care will be by agreement between the animal owner and the person providing the foster care.

5.11 Animal Handling and Welfare Equipment

The City's Ranger Service has a limited supply of animal handling and welfare equipment including animal cages, leashes and water/food bowls and as such, animal owners will be encouraged to supply their own equipment. The purchase of additional equipment or food supplied shall be made using a dedicated emergency cost string/account number and recorded appropriately for incident reporting purposes.

6.0 Administration

6.1 Exotic Animal Diseases and Biosecurity

The City has an extensive agricultural industry within its district and any significant outbreak of disease (or mass animal fatalities) is likely to have a significant impact on the community.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) – Agriculture and Food Services is the HMA for Animal and Plant Diseases. The City may be requested to provide community level resources and assistance to comply with HMAs incident management, and is responsible for recovery efforts.

Where there are a large number of livestock injured or deceased as a result of the emergency, the City will liaise with DPIRD in the management of treatment/euthanasia, or subsequent disposal of livestock carcasses.

Refer to **State Hazard Plan - Animal and Plant Biosecurity** for further information.

6.2 Fees and Charges

The City is entitled to charge impound and/or sustenance fees for animals that are temporarily housed at any of the City's facilities (e.g. the ACF, or Churchill Park). Depending on the size and nature of the incident, and the individual circumstances that resulted in the animal being impounded/temporarily housed, the City may at its own discretion waive any or all fees associated with the impounding or temporary housing of the animal.

During an emergency, the City may also consider waiving of fees for:

- The disposal of deceased companion animals at its waste facilities
- The surrender of an animal where the circumstances of the surrender are deemed, by the Ranger Services Coordinator or a Senior Ranger, to be associated with the emergency.

6.3 Requests for Assistance

All incoming requests for assistance from the public with regard to animal welfare (i.e. rescues, roaming, lost and found) shall be recorded and processed using the City's established Ranger CRM system.

Where the AWCC is activated as part of the larger Disaster Recovery Room, members of the Ranger Services Admin Team will be rostered to administer this process as part of the Recovery Team.

Attachment 1 – ACF Temporary Housing & Release Form

Animal Care Facility Temporary Housing Form

| Owner / Agent Contact Details (person leaving animal) | | |
|---|--|---|
| <u>Owner/Agent Name:</u> | _____ | |
| <u>Address:</u> | _____ | |
| <u>Mobile Phone:</u> | _____ | Owner <input type="checkbox"/> Agent <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <u>Secondary Contact:</u> | _____ | <u>Email Address:</u> _____ |
| | _____ | <u>Mobile Phone:</u> _____ |
| Animal Details | Animal Number 1 | Animal Number 2 |
| <u>Name:</u> | _____ | _____ |
| <u>Breed:</u> | _____ | _____ |
| <u>Colour:</u> | _____ | _____ |
| <u>Registration No:</u> | _____ | _____ |
| <u>Equipment:</u> | Collar <input type="checkbox"/> Rego Tags <input type="checkbox"/> Leash <input type="checkbox"/> | Collar <input type="checkbox"/> Rego Tags <input type="checkbox"/> Leash <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <u>Comments:</u> | _____ | _____ |
| (comments should include any additional equipment left with the animal, any special dietary or medical needs, and any behavioural issues in relation to the safe keeping of the animal and staff) | _____ | _____ |
| <u>Conditions:</u> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The voluntary housing of animals at the ACF is done at the owner's risk. 2. Owners will have limited, or no access to their animals during their stay. 3. The maximum period an animal may be voluntarily housed at the ACF is 48 hours (the City may extend this period on compassionate grounds). | |

I acknowledge I have read and understood the conditions under which my animal(s) may be temporarily housed at the City of Busselton Animal Care Facility.

Name of owner or owner's agent

Signature

OFFICE USE ONLY

Comments at time of admission (including any health issues):

Name of officer admitting animal

Signature

Admission date/time: ____/____/____

____:____ AM / PM

Animal Care Facility Release Form

| Owner / Agent Contact Details (person collecting animal) | | | |
|--|-------|-----------------------|---|
| <u>Owner/Agent Name:</u> | _____ | | |
| <u>Address:</u> | _____ | | |
| | _____ | | Owner <input type="checkbox"/> Agent <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <u>Mobile Phone:</u> | _____ | <u>Email Address:</u> | _____ |

Name of owner or owner's agent

Signature

OFFICE USE ONLY

Comments at time of release (including any health issues):

All equipment, food and medication as listed at the time of admission has been returned: Yes No

Name of officer releasing animal

Signature

Release date/time: ____/____/____ :____ AM / PM