

1 Policy History

Revision No.	Council Meeting Date	Minute No.	Adoption Date
1	28/09/2004	0702	28/09/2004
2	14/03/2006	92	14/03/2006
3	11/05/2010	0139	11/05/2010
4	09/06/2015	15/161	09/06/2015
5	23/02/2016	16/046	23/02/2016
6	10/03/2020	20/065	17/04/2020

2 Policy Scope

The policy applies to all companion animals impounded or surrendered to the Griffith Pound and Rehoming Centre ("the Centre").

The Centre is an impounding facility established under the provisions of the Companion Animals Act 1998 and Companion Animals Regulation 2008. The Centre is committed to the responsible rehoming and minimal euthanasia of companion animals but should not be viewed as an animal shelter for companion animals to inhabit for indefinite periods of time.

3 Policy Objective

To provide clear protocols for the rehoming and adoption of companion animals (cats and dogs) which are impounded or surrendered to the Griffith Pound and Rehoming Centre ("the Centre").

The objectives will be to:

Manage Council's requirement to impound stray companion animals, and provide secure holding facilities pending;

- The return of as many microchipped and/or registered companion animals as possible to their original owners and enable pet owners to reclaim lost animals.
- The rehoming of as many as possible unclaimed suitable companion animals from the Griffith Pound and Rehoming Centre through either the adoption of the companion animal or by the use of approved rehoming/rescue agencies for the animal's further care and rehoming process.
- The reduction of euthanasia rates of companion animals suitable for rehoming through adoption by members of the community or registered rehoming groups.
- Effective promotion of animals for adoption on Council's website.
- The provision of euthanasia services in the event that items b) & c) are not able to be achieved.

4 Policy Statement

At all times, the capture and hold procedures set by the Companion Animals Act 1998 and Companion Animals Regulation 2008 shall be observed.

The only times that Council Compliance Staff will not take an animal directly to the Centre is when it can be readily returned to its legal residence and owner in the field, or when the animal is injured or considered too sick to enter the facility. In these cases, the animal will be taken to a Griffith veterinary hospital for assessment and treatment. A sick or injured companion animal which has been surrendered to the Centre (either directly to staff or deposited at the Centre after hours) may also be transferred to a Griffith veterinary hospital.

4.1 Un-Microchipped Companion Animals

4.1.1 Holding Period

When Compliance staff locate or retrieve a stray, seized or unwanted companion animal, the animal is scanned for a microchip. If the companion animal is not microchipped or has no other distinguishing mark, collar, tag or the like, it will be taken to the Centre where it will be held for **7 days**, after which it can be legally sold, rehomed or euthanised.

Council may hold any companion animal for at least 48 hours in excess of the minimum legislated hold periods if likely rehoming or sale is foreseeable.

4.1.2 Advertising

A companion animal suitable for adoption or rehoming will be advertised on Council's website after 7 days of entering the Centre to ensure maximum exposure and increased chance of rehoming or adoption. Advertising will at least make reference to the gender, best estimation of breed, age and date of availability.

4.2 Microchipped Companion Animals

4.2.1 Holding Period

If an animal is identified as having a microchip number, staff will notify the owner to arrange return of the animal to its home. This may attract a release fee under Council's Revenue Policy and any fines as may be applicable.

After being held in the Centre for **14 days**, the animal becomes the property of Council, ceasing to be that of the registered owner. The animal can then be legally sold, rehomed or euthanised.

Council may hold any companion animal for at least 48 hours in excess of the minimum legislated hold periods if likely rehoming or sale is foreseeable.

4.2.2 Advertising

A companion animal suitable for adoption or rehoming will be advertised on Council's website after 14 days of entering the Centre to ensure maximum exposure and increased chance of rehoming or adoption. Advertising will include the gender, best estimation of breed, age and date of availability.

4.3 Surrendered Animals

Animals surrendered by their owners to the Centre become the property of Griffith City Council.

Animals surrendered by their owners that may be suitable for rehoming or adoption will be made available on Council's website. No holding period will be applicable.

4.4 Euthanasia

Companion animals are only to be euthanised if they are not considered suitable for rehoming.

In accordance with Section 64(2) of the Companion Animals Act 1998, feral and infant companion animals seized or surrendered to Council's facility may be euthanised prior to the standard holding period as set out in Section 64(1) of the Act. (Refer to Council Policy CO-CP-704 – Management of Infant & Feral Animals at Griffith Pound).

Euthanasia procedures will be carried out by a local veterinarian.

4.5 Animal Adoption and Re-Homing and Foster Care – Specific Provisions

For animals identified as being suitable for sale or re-homing, the following procedure will be observed:

4.5.1 Advertising

- 4.5.1.1 Council shall regularly publish a list of companion animals held in the Centre that are considered suitable for rehoming.
- 4.5.1.2 The Centre's website will be the default site for all animals available for rehoming from the facility.
- 4.5.1.3 Animals may, in addition to the above Council managed media forums, also be listed on other social media outlets and websites.
- 4.5.1.4 A companion animal suitable for adoption or rehoming will be advertised as soon as lawfully practicable after entering the Centre to ensure maximum exposure and increased chance of rehoming or adoption (see 4.1.2 and 4.2.2).

4.5.1.5 Advertising will include the gender, best estimation of breed and age and date of availability (see 4.1.2 and 4.2.2).

4.5.2 Access to Viewing and Meeting Animals

4.5.2.1 Any person wishing to view or meet an animal that has been identified from the above advertising mediums is able to do so.

4.5.2.2 Animal viewing or meeting can take place at any time that is convenient to both the prospective adopter or rescue agency and Council Compliance staff.

4.5.2.3 Due to Work Health & Safety and Public Liability requirements, persons are required to nominate the animal they wish to view or meet, and Compliance Staff will facilitate the viewing or meeting.

4.5.2.4 Animals may be taken by a potential owner for a “trial” period as coordinated by Council Compliance staff.

4.5.3 Adoption

4.5.3.1 Council will permit the adoption of a companion animal to a member of the public; however that person must sign a waiver and indemnify Council that they take the animal in an “as is” condition. The adoption will require payment of the cost of microchipping and registration if not already applicable to the animal. Subject to the following:

4.5.3.1.1 The new owner will be required to pay the appropriate fees for microchipping and registration, if not already done. Under the Companion Animals Act, dogs and cats are required to be microchipped and registered before release. The animal will only be released following the payment of microchipping fees and registration fees at the Council’s main building.

4.5.3.1.2 Animals requiring microchipping will be “chipped” by Council Compliance staff.

4.5.3.1.3 Registration fees will be reduced if the animal is de-sexed as per current fees as maintained by the Office of Local Government.

4.5.3.1.4 Payment of Registration fees may be deferred if the new owner undertakes to de-sex an animal and provides proof of payment.

4.5.3.2 New owners are recommended that a vet check, vaccinations, heart and intestinal worming treatment of the animal be undertaken

(these are all to be paid by the owner). Council and vets cannot guarantee the animal's health and behaviour as Council and vets do not know the animal's background.

4.5.4 Rehoming

- 4.5.4.1 A rehoming agency will be an organisation approved by Council and will hold an exemption from the Minister under Section 17(c) of the Companion Animals Regulation.
- 4.5.4.2 The rehoming agency will provide Griffith City Council with its policy for rehoming and a list of approved persons to act on their behalf. A copy of the rehoming agency's public liability insurance which identifies Griffith City Council as an interested party should be available on request.
- 4.5.4.3 Council may enter into agreement with more than one rehoming agency.
- 4.5.4.4 Council will be the sole arbitrator in all rehoming matters and all decisions made by Council will be final.
- 4.5.4.5 First contact to Council and confirmed adoption details will be the reasonable grounds as to why one person or agency claims an animal over another.
- 4.5.4.6 In certain circumstances, such as young, aged or frail animals, foster care arrangements may be organised with rehoming agencies. This will be at the discretion of Council Compliance staff who will contact rehoming agencies to seek interim foster care arrangements (refer to Council Policy CO-CP-704).
- 4.5.4.7 All animals leaving the Council facility must be microchipped and registered as per the legislation. Registration is exempted to approved rehoming organisations under Section 17(c) of the Companion Animals Regulation. After claiming the animal, this function becomes the responsibility of the agency prior to adopting the animal out.
- 4.5.4.8 Griffith City Council reserves the right to not re-home any animal.

4.5.5 Restrictions to Adoption or Rehoming

- 4.5.5.1 No animal may be adopted by or rehomed to any person without identification and proof of age to be over 18 years old.
- 4.5.5.2 No animal may be adopted or rehomed if doing so would be illegal or create undue risks to humans or other animals.

5 Definitions

Companion Animal – means either a dog or a cat
Infant - puppy or kitten less than 12 weeks of age

6 Legislation

Local Government Act 1993
Companion Animals Act 1998
Companion Animals Regulation 2008
Impounding Act 1993
NSW Animal Welfare Code of Practice No 5 - Dogs and Cats in Animal Boarding Establishments
Guideline on the Exercise of Functions under the Companion Animals Act 1998

7 Related Documents

Council Policy CO-CP-704 – Management of Infant & Feral Animals at Griffith Pound

8 Directorate

Sustainable Development