

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
7	09/07/2024	24/182	08/08/2024

2 Policy Scope

The policy applies to all companion animals impounded or surrendered to the Griffith City 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 2018*. 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 City Pound and Rehoming Centre.

The objectives will be to:

Manage Council's requirement to impound 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 owners to reclaim lost animals.
- The rehoming of as many as possible unclaimed '*suitable*' companion animals from the Centre through either the adoption of the companion animal or by the use of approved rehoming/rescue agencies.
- The reduction of euthanasia rates of companion animals suitable for rehoming through adoption by members of the community or approved rehoming/rescue agencies.
- Effective promotion of animals for adoption on Council's website and social media platforms.
- The provision of humane euthanasia services in the event that items b) & c) are not able to be achieved.

4 Policy Statement

At all times, the procedures for dealing with seized or surrendered animals set by the *Companion Animals Act 1998* and *Companion Animals Regulation 2018* shall be observed.

The only times that Council Compliance staff may 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 local 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 local veterinary hospital.

4.1 Un-microchipped Companion Animals

4.1.1 Holding Period

When a seized or surrendered companion animal (other than an animal surrendered by its owner) is delivered to the Centre, the animal is scanned for a microchip. If the companion animal is not microchipped, has no other distinguishing mark, collar, tag or the like, and no person comes forward to claim the animal, it will be held for a minimum of **7 days**, after which it can be legally sold, rehomed or humanely euthanised.

4.1.2 Advertising

Companion animals will be listed on Griffith City Council website and social media platforms, and 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

When an animal is scanned and identified on the Companion Animal Registry, staff will give notice in writing to the owner. Staff will also use their best endeavours to establish who the owner of an animal is e.g. via ID name tag.

Release of the animal may attract fees under Council's Revenue Policy, fees as per state government regulations, and any fines as may be applicable.

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

Council may hold any companion animal in excess of the minimum legislated hold periods if required, e.g. likely rehoming or sale is foreseeable.

4.2.2 Advertising

Companion animals will be listed on Griffith City Council website and social media platform, and at least make reference to the gender, best estimation of breed, age and date of availability.

4.3 Surrendered Animals

Animals surrendered by their owners to the Centre immediately 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 and social media platforms as soon as practicable.

4.4 Euthanasia

Animals deemed unsuitable for rehoming or unable to be rehomed through adoption by members of the community or approved rehoming /rescue agencies will be humanely euthanised.

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 humanely 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 and rehoming Centre).

Euthanasia procedures will be carried out by a local veterinarian.

4.5 Notification

In accordance with Section 64B of the *Companion Animals Act 1998*, before humanely euthanising a seized or surrendered animal, Council will give written notice to at least 2 rehoming organisations that the animal is available for rehoming, and take reasonable steps to advertise on a webpage or through a social media platform that the animal is available for rehoming.

4.6 Animal Adoption and Re-Homing – Specific Provisions

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

4.6.1 Advertising

- a) Council shall regularly publish a list of companion animals held in the Centre that are considered suitable for rehoming.
- b) Griffith City Council's website will be the default site for all animals available for rehoming from the facility.
- c) Animals may also be listed on other social media outlets and websites.

- d) 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).
- e) Advertising will include a photo of the animal, the gender, best estimation of breed, and age, and a date of availability (see 4.1.2 and 4.2.2).

4.6.2 Access to Viewing and Meeting Animals

- a) Any person wishing to view or meet an animal that has been identified from the above advertising mediums is able to do so.
- b) Animal viewing or meeting can take place at any time that is convenient to both the prospective adopter or rescue agency and Council staff.
- c) Due to Work Health & Safety and Public Liability requirements, persons are required to nominate the animal they wish to view or meet, and Council staff will facilitate the viewing or meeting.

4.6.3 Adoption

- a) Council will permit the adoption of a companion animal to a member of the public; however that person must sign waiver CO-FO-710 'Animal Adoption from Griffith City Council' and indemnify Council that they take the animal in an "as is" condition.
- b) The adoption will require payment which includes microchipping, vaccination, desexing, and lifetime registration.
- c) Adoption payment is made at the Council's main building.
- d) Council and vets cannot guarantee the animal's health and behaviour.

4.6.4 Rehoming

- a) An approved rehoming/rescue agency will be an organisation approved by Council and will hold an exemption from the Minister under Section 17(1)(c) of the *Companion Animals Regulation 2018*.
- b) The approved rehoming/rescue agency must have completed a rescue application form CO-FO-551 'Rescue Organisation Application Form for release of animals from Griffith City Council Pound and Rehoming Centre' and been successfully appointed by the Director of Sustainable Development.
- c) Council may enter into agreement with more than one rehoming/rescue agency.

- d) Council will be the sole arbitrator in all rehoming matters and all decisions made by Council will be final.
- e) Council has sole discretion as to why one person or agency claims an animal over another. Adoption will take precedence over rescue.
- f) In certain circumstances, such as young, aged, or frail animals, release under duty of care arrangements may be organised with rehoming/rescue agencies. This will be at the discretion of Council staff who will contact approved rehoming/rescue agencies and or approved foster carers to seek interim care arrangements (refer to Council Policy CO-CP-704).
- g) All animals leaving the Centre must be microchipped. Registration is exempted to rehoming organisations approved under Section 17(1)(c) of the *Companion Animals Regulation 2018*. After claiming the animal, this requirement for registration becomes responsibility of the agency or owner the animal is rehomed to.
- h) Griffith City Council reserves the right to not rehome/release any animal.

4.6.5 Restrictions to Adoption or Rehoming

- a) No animal may be adopted by or rehomed to any person without identification and proof of age to be over 18 years old.
- b) 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, or any other animal that is prescribed by the regulations as a companion animal.

Infant Companion 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.

Feral Companion 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.

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 owner's details.

6 Legislation

Local Government Act 1993

Companion Animals Act 1998

Companion Animals Regulation 2018

Public Spaces (Unattended Property) Act 2021

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 and rehoming centre

8 Directorate

Sustainable Development