



the bushland shire

creating a living environment

SUPPLEMENTARY BUSINESS PAPER

ORDINARY MEETING

**Wednesday, 11 November, 2009
at 6:30 pm**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS

Item 23 EN43/09 Expressions of Interest for Companion Animal Pound..... 1

23 EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR COMPANION ANIMAL POUND

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An Expression of Interest (EOI 21/2009) for an Animal Pound, Approved Holding Facility and Pick up and Delivery Service was advertised during August and closed on Tuesday 25 August 2009. Three submissions were received with only one providing details of a full pound service covering all the requirements contained in the Expression of Interest document.

The report recommends that a three month trial be undertaken from November 2009 to February 2010 using the services of Sydney Dogs and Cats Home Inc as the pound service provider and Council officers attempt to have as many animals as possible returned to the owner rather than being transported immediately to the pound.

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this report is to advise Council of the outcome of the recent Expression of Interest EOI 21/2009: Provision of a Companion Animal Pound and/or Pick Up and Delivery Service of Companion Animals to the Pound or Options for Establishments to be Approved Animal Holding Facilities and provide a recommendation to Council.

DISCUSSION

Background

Under the *NSW Companion Animals Act 1998*, a 'council pound' means

- (a) a public or private pound established by a council under the *Impounding Act 1993*
- (b) any other place approved by a council as a place for the holding of animals for the purposes of this Act.

An Animal Pound service has being provided for Council for many years by the Thornleigh Veterinary Hospital.

Expression of Interest EOI 21/2009 – Companion Animal Pound

An Expression of Interest (EOI) for an Animal Pound, Approved Holding Facility and Pick up and Delivery Service was advertised during August and closed on Tuesday 25 August 2009. The responses to the EOI were opened on that date and three submissions were received from:

- Sydney Dogs and Cats Home Inc
- NSW Animal Rescue
- Kempsey Park Partnership

The evaluation of these submissions is contained in the confidential memo attached to this report.

One of the submissions conformed to the requirement to provide a pound service and covered the requirements contained in the Expression of Interest document. Two submissions were found to be nonconforming.

Tender Assessment

The submission from Sydney Dogs and Cats Home Inc (SDCH) provided a statement that addressed the requirement and understanding of the scope of services to be provided. A schedule of fees was provided as required, including the proposed rates for impounding and maintenance. The submission was on the understanding that Council would hold animals locally that were able to be returned home and only transfer those animals where Council was unable to locate the current owners.

SDCH at Carlton is the current contractor for many other councils and has the ability to provide the 'pound services' required under the *NSW Companion Animals Act 1993*. SDCH is able to cover all of the services required of a council pound. However, given its location transportation to the facility would pose difficulties for the Environmental Sustainability and Health Branch. Council currently employs the equivalent of two full time officers to cover the field duties for companion animals. With a potential turn around time of three hours this could possibly equate to the loss of an officer for a total of at least one day a week.

It is proposed that a three month trial of using the services of the Sydney Dogs and Cats Home Inc. be undertaken from November 2009 to February 2010. The trial will include, whenever possible, taking advantage of opportunities for animals to be held at a local veterinary surgery for a short time while waiting to be returned home by an officer or picked up by the owner or agent.

Those animals that:

- have no microchip or other identification
- has incorrect details recorded on the register
- have been the subject of multiple offences
- have been seized due to a dog attack incident

will be transported for impounding at the facility at Carlton. This trial will include using a Council officer to transport the animals to the pound, and this may sometimes mean finishing the run after hours.

At the conclusion of this trial the information collected, including numbers seized, numbers impounded, time taken for officers to take animals home and transport animals to the pound and ongoing costs to Council will be evaluated and used to make a decision on whether to enter into a formal agreement or look at other options.

A further report will be presented to Council at the conclusion of the trial period, providing the details of the information collected.

Issue of Feral Cats

There are areas within the Shire where feral cats are a continuing problem and are collected through trapping. These cats are extremely difficult to house and handle. The legislation provides the following information for councils under these conditions:

NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 Section 64 Unclaimed seized or surrendered animal may be destroyed. Section (2) The council may, in accordance with any policy that has been adopted by the council in relation to the management of feral or infant companion animals, destroy the seized or surrendered animal concerned before the end of such period referred to in subsection (1).

In accordance with the *Section 64 (2)* it is proposed that Council adopt a policy that would allow those cats that are identified by a qualified veterinarian as feral through appearance and behaviour that demonstrates they are not domesticated and are not identified by a microchip, to be destroyed without a requirement to hold them for a period of 7 days.

BUDGET

Any potential variation to the adopted budget will be evaluated at the end of the trial period and included in a report to Council.

POLICY

In accordance with the *Section 64(2)* of the *NSW Companion Animals Act 1998* where animals are identified by a qualified veterinarian as feral through appearance and behaviour that demonstrates they are not domesticated and are not identified by a microchip, may be destroyed without the requirement to hold for a period of 7 days.

CONSULTATION

Consultation has taken place with companion animals staff at other councils including Willoughby, Pittwater and Ryde. Willoughby City Council commenced a pound service with Sydney Dogs and Cats Home Inc on 1 July 2009. The council rangers are delivering the animals to their home and/or holding in temporary facilities at a local veterinary surgery or their Council Depot. To date they have not had to transfer any animal to Carlton. City of Ryde uses Blacktown Council Animal Holding Facility as their Council Pound. They have temporary holding pens at their Depot for up to six dogs and the rangers travel to Blacktown two or three times a week.

Consultation has also taken place with veterinarians at Berowra Heights, Asquith, Hornsby, Galston, Glenorie and West Pennant Hills regarding opportunities for temporary holding at their surgeries while waiting to be returned home or transported to the pound. These veterinarians had indicated their willingness to undertake a trial period with council.

TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE SUMMARY

Triple Bottom Line is a framework for improving Council decisions by ensuring accountability and transparency on social, environmental and economic factors. It does this by reporting upon Council's strategic themes.

As this report is providing Council with information and proposing a trial only at this stage a Triple Bottom Line assessment will be undertaken as part of the proposed final actions.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

The responsible officer is Sue Moyes, Sustainable Health Coordinator, telephone 9847 6816 between the hours of 8.30 am and 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT:

1. Council undertake a three month trial using the Pound service provided by Sydney Dogs and Cats Home Inc at 77 Edward Street Carlton.
2. A further report be presented to Council outlining the results of the trial.
3. Council adopt a policy in relation to the management of feral cats as set out in EN 43/09.

ROBERT STEPHENS
Executive Manager
Environment Division

Attachments:

1. Confidential Memo - *This attachment should be dealt with in confidential session, under Section 10A (2) (c) of the Local Government Act, 1993. This report contains information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.*

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