



Animal Care Australia
2024

LOCAL COUNCIL ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLANS



Councils should promote pet keeping

Version 1 — 2024

Animal Welfare is Animal Care

“Animal Care Australia acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we reside, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.”



Local Council Animal Management must be about animal care (welfare) and not neighbourhood amenity.

This document concentrates on the importance of Council maintaining the right relationship with it's residents, and not falling victim to the ideologies of animal rights extremist views. Sadly many Councils across Australia have seen newly-elected Councillors attempt to impose their ideological views on the community.

Local Council Animal Management must be about animal welfare! Animal welfare is NOT about numbers – it is ensuring animals are receiving food and water, the right housing, are well cared for and maintained.

ACA strongly recommends Councils adopt an objective of supporting the keeping of animals:

"... Council acknowledges the importance animals play to the wellbeing of our residents. Council's default position is to encourage and promote the keeping of animals within our local government area."

Animal care within your Shire/municipality is not achieved by restricting the numbers of animals that can be housed or bred, in fact, restrictions can prove to be detrimental to many individual breeds of animals and have a plethora of un-intended consequences.

Throughout this document Animal Care Australia shows animal welfare and care is best improved by ensuring compliance with current legislation and educating the public on their responsibilities.

This is the sensible way of improving welfare outcomes, strengthening the relationship between Council and your residents, not arbitrary caps on numbers and heavy-handed tactics by rangers, inspectors or animal management officers.



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Who is Animal Care Australia?

Animal Care Australia is a national incorporated association advocating for higher welfare outcomes for animals by educating hobbyists and keepers and lobbying governments.

Animal Care Australia was founded in early 2018 to establish an organisation run solely by volunteers. With extreme animal rights and animal liberationist ideologies influencing government legislation, regulation and policy at our expense and to the detriment of our animals and pets, it has become necessary to provide government with a balancing voice. The association has a strong committee composed of representatives for each major animal group – dogs, cats, birds, horses, reptiles, farm animals, small mammals, native mammals and mobile educators.

By uniting the broad spectrum of animal groups, collectively we offer an experienced, sensible approach to animal welfare. By educating our members and the general public about the importance of treating animals with kindness and respect for their needs, and promoting the humane treatment of animals to improve animal welfare outcomes, ACA is in the unique position of lobbying and advocating for all animals within our care.

Animal Care Australia does not support irresponsible breeding or individuals who commit acts of cruelty against animals.

Animal Care Australia provides priority to the following:

- ⇒ **consulting with government for stronger welfare outcomes**
- ⇒ **encouraging government to increase education of the public in animal welfare and best care techniques**
- ⇒ **educating the public on handling their animals with kindness & respect and the importance of the animals' needs**
- ⇒ **educating everyone in the differences between animal welfare and animal rights**

Animal Care Australia is currently recognised nationally by all state government animal welfare departments and we are actively consulting as a key stakeholder in all animal welfare legislation reviews being conducted. We are directly consulting and advising, with the departments including revising codes of practice for the keeping of all pets.

Animal Care Australia opposes attempts to reduce, restrict or impose caps on the numbers of animals being kept in our care.

- ⇒ **Animal Care Australia implores all levels of government to provide more adequate funding for educating the public on their responsibilities as pet owners including supporting & promoting animal keeper associations & clubs.**
- ⇒ **Animal Care Australia encourages government & local council to educate the public on responsible buying/adopting.**
- ⇒ **Animal Care Australia encourages government and local councils to provide initiatives to the public that ensure people of lower income communities can maintain their animals' welfare needs — such as concessions for veterinary treatment, de-sexing programs, food and housing through vouchers or other assistance.**
- ⇒ **When matters arise that require intervention by Councils, a documented process for the issuing of orders must be implemented. For example: education must be the first course of action; checking on implementation of that education; then warnings where failure occurs; followed by fines and then restricted ownership orders. Any attempts to reduce the numbers being hoarded must be reasonable, and gradual, to encourage any hoarding behaviour to slow and to provide the resident with an understanding of proper animal care.**
- ⇒ **Clear animal cruelty situations should be dealt with by the relevant compliance and enforcement regulations.**



What are the solutions?

There is no easy one step fix all solution. The fact of the matter is the more legislation and regulations you implement the greater the incentive to hide. This creates a higher level of non-compliance, becoming more difficult to police and ultimately the victims (the animals) are more greatly impacted with welfare standards diminishing in a bid to avoid detection.

Animal Care Australia strongly advocates more focus should be aimed at changing the main perspective to educating about responsible pet ownership.

Educating the public is a key step into changing behaviour. Education needs to be themed with the aim of making pet owners more aware of their responsibilities. In general, most people are unaware that there are Codes of Practice that must be followed. They know that animal cruelty laws exist, but they don't generally know what is written in those laws.

Local Councils are in a unique position to provide this education. Ideally education needs to start in our schools but Councils can assist by including responsible pet ownership information in mail-outs/information leaflets, annual reports or specialised promotional material. Councils often hold fairs and other community events — one of which could be a local pet fair inviting residents, local business and local animal welfare advocates to share their knowledge and promote

responsible ownership. Children are usually the one's seeking to own a pet and they are also the keepers and breeders for the decades that follow. Introducing basic pet care and the responsibility of pet ownership skills to children will enhance the understanding of pet ownership within the community and more specifically will help overcome many barriers within multicultural communities, where often pet welfare and ownership has been inherited from different societies with a vastly different understanding of how animals should be kept.

Educating the community about responsible buying and the need to ensure you buy from a reputable breeder is crucial in this era of technology where not-so-credible sellers are attracting the new generations that live in the technological space. Once upon a time if you wanted a pet you read an advertisement, you phoned, you visited the home of the breeder, you saw where and the conditions of how it was bred and you chose the animal you wanted to take home.

Today, pictures of animals are posted, money is transferred and quite often animals are exchanged with the new owners not having seen where they were born, the parents or the standards they had been living in. In an increasing trend no animals are exchanged at all — and the buyer is scammed.

Animal Care Australia encourages Council to implement responsible pet ownership programs.

Animal Care Australia acknowledges Local Councils have been left to implement their own additional rules for keeping and breeding animals — yet most residents are completely unaware these policies exist.

Animal keeping associations strongly encourage better welfare standards. Members of animal clubs engage in positive peer pressure to

maintain high standards and improve welfare. The sharing of husbandry techniques and awareness of ethical and responsible breeding becomes the norm.

Local Councils should be working with and supporting these associations. Council needs to support the clubs and it needs to see the pet keeping public as one 'large' club where people are incentivised to do the right thing — rather than only concentrating on those doing the wrong thing.

Initiatives to improve animal welfare and in doing so solving neighbourhood amenity issues

Initiatives and incentives are vital in changing societal behaviour. 'Reward the good — punish the bad'. Too much focus is on punishing the bad and very little reward is available for those people doing the right thing.

Local Councils should be providing concessions for veterinary treatment, de-sexing costs, food and housing for those under hardship circumstances.

People who register their pets should not be charged a fee for the 'privilege' instead when a pet is registered the owner should be rewarded, with a voucher discounting the cost of their next vaccination or on microchipping the pet.

Improve Council management

- In some States/territories Local Councils are responsible for much of the information not being updated into pet registries and therefore records are constantly inaccurate
- Local Council fees vary and some are too expensive — discouraging the payment of fees and the intended use of a Registry.
- Animal Care Australia has concerns pet registries are being used by Councils to ascertain the number of animals at each property and the number of litters being produced — to the detriment of the breeders privacy — particularly given the high level of

flaws and inaccurate information being stored within the Registry.

- Local Councils mandate expensive DA or permit requirements that actually discourage a relationship with it's residents. Permits should not be a financial burden on pet owners, or a cash-grab by Council.

ACA opposes attempts to reduce, restrict or impose caps on the numbers of animals being kept



- The requirement for DA's should only be placed on pet keepers who intend on building elaborate breeding facilities and not on every day pet owners.
- Council's rangers are not adequately trained in species specific husbandry, keeping, housing and feeding requirements. Some rangers may be versed in dog or cat knowledge, but even that is limited in many council regions.
- Many Council rangers and Animal Management Officers are ex-animal shelter staff. While Councils often believe this is beneficial, the opposite is true. These individuals come from a space where they have seen and experienced the worst of pet ownership, and this only ensures a bias when performing their roles. Their roles must be about encouraging pet ownership — not dictating their personal experiences and/or other ideologies that have been embedded

during that previous experience.

- Animal Management Plans have in the past been drafted and implemented without the appropriate key stakeholder input and DO NOT reflect key requirements for the keeping of pets and livestock. Local neighbourhood sentiment and bias SHOULD NOT be the basis for an animal welfare or management policy.
- Still today, most Councils do not provide appropriate notice of an impending review and rarely seek out the local, regional or state animal keeping associations to consult. This is vital as these groups and organisations have the greatest level of experience and knowledge of best practices for their specific species.

It is reprehensible that Councils require rate-paying residents to pay additional exorbitant fees for what is a basic right of owning a pet. This is pure revenue-raising/profitteering and reflects poorly on that Council.

It is outrageous to expect a small animal hobbyist (recreational) breeder to pay a large annual fee to be able to continue to maintain healthy viable breeding lines. Contrary to popular belief hobbyists are not breeding their animals to make

When demand is increased values skyrocket!

Increased values equals more incentive to produce irresponsibly



a profit. They are passionate about improving the health and temperament of their animals.

Annual permit fees for additional animals do not improve welfare or protect animals instead they will cause owners to practice ‘underground’ and no longer seek to be involved in animal keeping community activities such as the animal related clubs. These clubs and groups are the information hubs on educating best animal welfare and ethical breeding practices to members and the general public, and with Local Council policies enforcing restrictions and revenue-raising, this valuable information by these experts will no longer be shared and put into practice.

Imposing blanket limits on numbers of animals that can be kept especially when based solely on land size such as is often used in Council management plans is irresponsible and more often impractical.

Animal Care Australia strongly discourages policies that restrict keeping of animals on the supposed basis of ‘preventing noise, odour or other issues for neighbours’. Laws are already in place to deal with neighbourhood nuisance issues including matters due to poor animal keeping practices.

In fact, the stronger Council encourages responsible pet ownership, the greater the animal welfare outcomes. These improved outcomes also reduce the number of issues relating to noise, odour, etc.

In fact, restricting any companion animal species **WILL** result in **BREED-SPECIFIC EXTINCTIONS**.

In 2015 a Joint Select Committee on Companion Animal Breeding Practices in NSW found “... **the number of animals kept by a breeder is not in itself a factor which determines the welfare of breeding animals.**”

In addition, The Committee heard no evidence which outlined how to calculate the number to which breeders should be limited.

The Committee heard from a number of stakeholders that health and welfare issues for

breeding animals were not confined to breeders, or to breeding establishments with large numbers of animals.

The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) submitted that the scale of a breeding operation was not indicative of welfare issues and large scale breeders could be reputable and caring.

Breeders expressed a number of concerns in relation to limiting the number of animals that they could keep. Concerns included loss of genetic diversity, an increase in overbreeding, a greater shift to unregulated 'underground' breeding, and issues for particular breeds.

Limiting the numbers of animals allowed to be kept by breeders would impact on legitimate breeding programs, particularly for rarer breeds, leading to loss of bloodlines and an increase in health problems associated with smaller gene pools.

Limiting the number of cats or dogs allowed to be kept by breeders would undo years of careful breeding practices aimed at eliminating certain genetic problems. These breeding initiatives are seeing great results in this area.

Parliamentary Inquiries findings

Multiple Parliamentary Inquiries have received a number of submissions that supported a total ban on the breeding of companion animals for commercial purposes or limiting the number of animals allowed to be kept by breeders. While the respective Committees have acknowledged these submissions, the continued finding is that they were unable to articulate how limiting the number of animals might improve animal welfare outcomes. It has also not been possible to determine why an arbitrary number of animals, such as ten, was considered the appropriate maximum number of breeding animals allowed, irrespective of the type of breed or whether the animal was a dog or cat etc.

The Committees received no strong evidence that the scale of breeding operations correlated with the welfare of the breeding animals. Indeed, they have received submissions from local councils, animal shelter operators, veterinarians, the RSPCA and Animal Welfare League NSW highlighting inadequate welfare conditions in many small scale breeding operations consisting of only one or two breeding animals.

With the findings of Parliamentary Committees concluding “the number of animals kept by a breeder is not in itself a factor which determines the welfare of breeding animals” and with many of the potential reasons NOT to place restrictions now being experienced in Victoria where shelters and pounds are inundated because of an increase in underground and unethical breeders

How can your Council justify any restrictions?



Council have a responsibility to be aware of what is happening around them.

While Animal Care Australia focusses on all pets we acknowledge most Councils have a responsibility for how dogs and cats are kept in the local government area. This responsibility is legislated by the states or territories.

Councils should be adhering to the legislation as it is prescribed but need to remain vigilant when proposals are drafted that introduce further restrictions, such as what has occurred in Victoria.

In 2017 legislation in Victoria was introduced that restricted dog and cat breeding to small numbers of female animals and limited numbers of litters. The introduced legislation in Victoria has seen a drastic increase in:

- X — unhealthy puppies & kittens at veterinary surgeries & shelters***
- X — complaints relating to scammers and non-supply of animals where deposits were paid**
- X — unregistered breeders (essentially ‘puppy farms’ — by the very definition)**
- X — prices skyrocketing for all breeds of puppies and kittens (pre-covid19) with exorbitant prices during Covid19.**

*(Source: <https://www.smh.com.au/business/consumer-affairs/penned-in-victorians-pining-for-a-pet-drive-cruel-smuggling-trade-20200731-p55h6n.html>)

There has been a marked decrease in:

- * Registered breeders who are actually breeding their animals**
- * numbers of healthy puppies and kittens**
- * breeding females available to other breeders for genetic diversity**

With the restriction of only 10 females per property many shelters & rescues have been unable to take on additional animals — resulting in some needing to be euthanased to maintain numbers as per permits. Despite assurances that

Councils should not be over reaching and implementing additional restrictions above those legislated by the state/territory.



services & organisations would be exempt - changes to local council codes have seen many ‘boarding & rescue’ facilities close or run on limited numbers.

Shelters and Councils

Limitations in numbers will not reduce the numbers of animals entering and dying in shelters.

Animal Rights proponents claim number restrictions are necessary to stem the tide of animals entering and dying in shelters.

There is no question that too many animals die in shelters and pounds each year. However, there is no connection between the breeding of

a healthy litter of well tempered, healthy animals and the death of a stray dog in a shelter.

The number of animals in shelters is as a result of uneducated pet owners and unethical breeders.

Irresponsible breeding contributes but it does not solely overload the shelters – pet buyers – buying on the spot without a clue what they are getting themselves and the animals into, is the problem and it is not being addressed!

Most responsible breeders are available to answer questions and help new owners to train and protect the health and well-being of their breeds. They are part of the solution to community issues and should not be treated as if they are the problem.

Buyers who purchase from less reputable sources will have less education and training from breeders and this will contribute to increasing the number of animals in shelters. The majority of dogs and cats in shelters is due to a lack of knowledge of the breeds behaviour, temperament and environmental needs.

This can only be changed by education — NOT restrictions.

Limiting numbers will increase the numbers of breeding animals having to be removed from a responsible person's care.

A 'limit law' penalises a responsible breeder who is not a nuisance or threat to neighbours; who keeps their animals in perfect health and conditions; who places animals responsibly and is a support system for the buyers, and MOST importantly sees them facing the loss of one or more of their companions.

Most people who breed see their animals as part of their family and the emotional cost to the breeder and the risk of homelessness for the animals should be paramount and not be underestimated by Councils or their local laws.

Limiting the numbers a resident can care for will not prevent them from keeping more than they are legally able to.

When restrictions result in a decrease in animal welfare - state governments AND local councils are complicit to the profiteering and cruelty.



A number limit is difficult, almost impossible to enforce without increased presence of animal control or policing agencies and will lead to a decrease in micro-chipping and council registration, vetting etc, to prevent cross-referencing.

At any given time numbers can fluctuate and enforcing over limit numbers is a very difficult task.

- ⇒ **animals will be hidden**
- ⇒ **animals that are over the permitted number will not receive veterinary care or other vital welfare needs due to the fear of being exposed to having over the maximum number.**
- ⇒ **responsible breeders who have welcomed buyers to their property will be more reluctant to do so if they fear being caught for more than permitted which then promotes online or carpark selling.**



Education — NOT restriction of numbers

Legislation and added restrictions via Council policies are detrimental to animal welfare.

Rather than looking at introducing more laws and regulations we need to be looking at better ways of housing and caring for breeding animals which does not place them in undesirable situations that compromise their welfare.

According to recent studies there are approx. 6.4 million dogs owned and approx. 5.3 million cats owned in Australia.

(Source: [Animal Medicines Australia Report 2022](#))

Each year it is estimated 450,000 puppies and 350,000 kittens are required to replace previous pets due to natural occurrences such as the death of family pets etc. to fill the demand.

Pets teach us empathy, compassion, responsibility, unconditional love — to name a few. They are with us for a few years of our lives — but we are with them ALL of their lives!



Dogs and cats are used for a variety of reasons including companionship and the benefits of this inter-species relationship with the desire of humans to share their lives with pets is well documented.

This is not something that will change. It is not something Councils should be ignoring or trying to restrict.

The demand for puppies/kittens will continue to exist. People will not miraculously want to buy less animals just because breeders cannot breed as many. Someone will breed these animals to fill the demand.

Responsible Breeding—NOT less breeding!

Animal Care Australia encourages Councils to introduce incentives that would encourage more, not less, reputable, well educated, skilful breeders whose focus is on what is best for the animals in every aspect.

This is not reliant on how many animals they own or breed or what type they breed, or how many litters/young they have or where they choose to sell them. It is solely reliant on how they feel about their animals and their desire to get it right for the welfare of their animals, their breeds, the future generations and the buyers. These are the breeders who should be encouraged and rewarded for their achievements and their ability to consistently breed beautiful, healthy animals that increases the joy of ownership for those who then provide them with their 'forever homes.'

Ethical breeders are knowledgeable. They run long term ethical breeding programs maintaining the highest welfare outcomes for their animals and are often mentors to others through club activities, usually as volunteers.

Loving keepers and breeders — NOT animal abusers!

As a Local Council, don't inexplicably paint them as animal abusers and criminals by placing additional burdens on them.

Is your Council a proponent of animal welfare OR animal rights?

Animal welfare and animal rights are often thought to lie on the same continuum – this is not the case.

Generally accepted principles defining these terms are as follows.

Animal Welfare

1. The need for a suitable environment.
2. The need for a suitable diet.
3. The need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns.
4. The need to be housed with, or apart from other animals.
5. The need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

Animal Rights

1. Animals are sentient beings that should not be owned by humans.
2. Humans and non-human beings should have equal rights both ethically and legally.
3. Animals should not be kept in captivity, including for food, entertainment, research, companionship, conservation or any other reason.

What does “cap the numbers or restrict the numbers residents can have” sound like to you?



Surely, a Local Council is not prepared to suggest that Australian families should be deprived of their right to own the animals of their choice, which they have deemed is best suited to their needs, surrounds and circumstances?

**Responsible breeders SHOULD be treated as HEROES - NOT CRIMINALS.
Don't punish the many for the actions of the few!**

Recommendations for species

Policies that restrict keeping of animals in an attempt to pre-empt and hence prevent noise, odour or other issues for neighbours are discouraged. Such restrictions, including permit requirements inflict an unnecessary compliance burden on residents and staff which only discourages animal keeping needlessly. Laws are already in place to deal with neighbourhood nuisance issues including matters due to poor animal keeping practices.

Birds:

Animal Care Australia strongly opposes specifying bird number limits for any property with an area exceeding 1000 square metres (0.1 ha).

The important factor for Council is the construction of appropriate housing/enclosures and the standard of welfare the birds are maintained under.

States/territories have codes of practice that should be followed and Councils should encourage the keeping of all birds according to those codes

Domestic and aviary birds:

A variety of avian species are routinely kept nationally and all states and territories require some level of licensing for certain native bird species.

Every bird species has its own management, husbandry, enclosure size and welfare requirements.

Many species are best kept as a community, with others kept as bonded pairs. The understanding

of their welfare and which applies to each species is best understood by their keepers – not by Council.

Land or enclosure size is an unreliable indicator of noise or odour. Recommended enclosure size varies considerably, along with diet, breeding capacity, and the ability to move excess newly bred birds, making the restriction of numbers extremely unwise.



Fowl and ground birds:

Animal Care Australia recognises the need for many Councils to limit the keeping of roosters and peacocks due to excessive noise produced at the most inopportune times for neighbours. Having stated that, Animal Care Australia does not support the restriction of these birds in non-residential zones — regardless of land size.

Restricting other ground dwelling birds such as pheasant, duck or quail holds no merit regardless of zoning.

Avicultural Clubs/Associations encourage their members to adhere to existing Codes of Practice. Council Animal Management Plans should point directly to the Associations and Codes of Practice requiring birds to be kept under their guidance.

Cats:

Animal Care Australia does not support the limiting of cats on land sizes greater than ¼ acres.

This simply defies logic, particularly if your primary reasoning is 'land size'.



Cats do better as social animals, and should not be restricted to being solely owned (unless that is preferred by the owners circumstances)

It should be noted Animal Care Australia opposes the limits imposed by breeding restrictive legislations implemented under the guise of anti-puppy farm/cattery ideologies.



Cat containment laws:

Animal Care Australia supports cat containment to the **owners' property**. Wording of these laws should not imply the keeping of cats to solely indoors.

The introduction of such laws should be assisted by Councils via support for DA's required to install outdoor cat enclosures, or installation of netting on or close to the fence-line. Council should not impose a 'metre from boundary' ruling when such an installation is being proposed. This assistance should include the waiving of fees for these DA's.

Animal Care Australia recognises the need to protect native species from predation and prevent nuisance to neighbours, but more importantly the welfare of the cats is paramount. Cats contained to their owners property are more likely to being protected from:

- ⇒ Being hit by a car
- ⇒ Being trapped or poisoned

- ⇒ Becoming the victim of another animal (eg: dogs)
- ⇒ Complaints & threats from neighbours
- ⇒ Being stolen
- ⇒ Being injured
- ⇒ Killing native wildlife
- ⇒ Other territorial cats
- ⇒ Catching transmissible diseases
- ⇒ Infestations of fleas/ticks/parasites

It is reasonable to expect cats to be kept contained to their owners property in the same way that we expect dogs, horses and rabbits to be contained.

Provisions must be provided for cats to be 'walked' on a lead/harness in the same way they are provided for dogs.

Dogs:

Animal Care Australia does not support the limiting of dogs on land sizes greater than ¼ acres.

This simply defies logic, particularly if your primary reasoning is 'land size'. Many Councils place illogical number restrictions on the keeping of dogs on land sizes greater than a standard residential block and then go on to provide exclusions for working dogs on these same land sizes.

Councils also forget to consider the requirements for larger dogs is far greater than smaller, and yet they place the same restrictions regardless.

In the opposite context, placing bans on dogs in properties consistent with the size of units,



caravans, or town houses completely discounts the ability of residents to keep smaller breed dogs in these premises. The elderly more often than not are the victims of such nonsensical restrictions.

It should be noted Animal Care Australia opposes the limits imposed by breeding restrictive legislations implemented under the guise of anti-puppy farm/cattery ideologies.



Horses and Livestock

When limiting numbers on horses and livestock, emphasis needs to be prioritised to the management system of the animals, the type of property (whether the land is cleared and level, or bush and steep, or contains waterways), and the welfare needs of the animals. The number of animals is simply irrelevant, it is really about how the property is managed and whether the animals are managed in a way that improves the land or degrades it.

A property that is properly set up with equi-central, cell grazing or other rational grazing systems can support many more animals in higher welfare conditions, than poorly maintained land with set stocking of only 2 animals. Proper grazing management also protects properties against fire, and limiting numbers of animals will lead to higher fuel loads and neglect of harder to manage areas, as land owners focus on the easier and cheaper to manage areas. This comes to the detriment of native species in the area, as well the human inhabitants and their horses and livestock.

Horses and livestock are herd animals, and should be kept in groups of more than 2 to meet their welfare needs and herd dynamics. Not doing so will create new welfare issues for the animals in your region.

Often Council laws only serve to punish good land managers, and negatively affect the welfare of their animals, and the productivity and appearance of their land. At worst it is discrimination of small acreage owners, preventing them from following proven farming principles utilising grazing behaviours of horses and livestock to properly manage their grazing lands.

Quality rural fringes are diminishing and poor acreage property planning with incorrect restrictive animal numbers is contributing to the degradation and misuse of land, further feeding the perception that animals are to blame for the loss of land quality. This is a misconception, and can be rectified with education - of councils as well as of land owners.

Instead of limiting the numbers of horses and livestock to unrealistically, unhealthy and poor welfare standards, council could invest in property management programs and workshops for acreage owners.

Courses that educate those who are new to the rural lifestyle on how to manage small acreage with animals, identify grass species and weeds, how to protect waterways and natural resources, and preserve native animal habitats on their land has been hugely successful in NSW and Victoria, with little to no cost to participants. These programs are easy to run, and encourage land owners to see the value of their investment, and take pride in looking after the land and their animals to a high standard. This benefits everyone, not just those that live there, but for tourism as well.





Small Mammals

Rats, mice, rabbits, ferrets and guinea pigs are primarily indoor pets and invariably kept in small enclosures. These animals do not exhibit extreme noise, are not intrusive and are free of the diseases and pathogens that often plague their wild counter parts. In fact they pose no health problem to their owners and are renowned for keeping themselves well groomed.

For the club registered breeding community any proposed limitations are generally unrealistic, especially given the average littler size for some of these species is larger than most proposed limits suggesting that these proposals do not take into account the biological and social necessities of some species. Additionally, due to their short life-spans it is vital that several adult pairs be kept at any given time to ensure that the diversity and quality of the gene-pool is maintained. Without allowing owners to keep 'breeders', the health of the species will invariably suffer.

Owners of these smaller pets work to improve the quality of the animal in health and temperament and Animal Care Australia has policies for registered breeders who are bound by their published Code of Ethics and Code of Practice along with provisions provided within all current animal welfare acts.

It is our stance that number limits on keeping small mammal species is unrealistic.



Many of these animals are colony animals, and it is important for their health and well-being to be kept in larger numbers than what most policies are imposing. In addition Animal Care Australia supports the scientific research (*Short Communication: Rats Demand For Group Size - Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science 7 (4) 267-272 – 2004*) into ideal colony numbers for rats, which have demonstrated that the restating of numbers is not compatible with the fulfilment of basic social needs and high welfare standards. As companion animals allowing more appropriate colony sizes poses no threat to community, health or animal welfare.

Councils place restrictions on the keeping of pet rabbits and ferrets to outdoor enclosures only. This is completely inappropriate and places the animals at a greater risk of disease and illness.

All small mammals are best kept indoors where their living conditions can be monitored and maintained and reduces the risk of death from biological control methods often utilised by Councils for wild populations of European rabbits or hares.

Councils must not place gender restrictions on the keeping of small mammals.





Reptiles and Amphibians

Animal Care Australia strongly opposes Councils specifying reptile number limits for any property.

Reptile keeping is legislated and monitored by native wildlife licensing legislation in each state and territory. It should be noted that under that legislation there are no limits placed on numbers of reptiles permitted to be kept.

Reptile keepers are strictly monitored, with annual returns required, along with a Code of Practice that requires all reptile keepers to abide by animal standards for husbandry, feeding, enclosure sizes and more. Council SHOULD NOT be interfering with legislation that already governs the keeping of reptiles.

The vast number of reptiles licensed are kept indoors, in enclosures in children's bedrooms etc as pets.

A variety of reptile species are routinely kept in with many species kept as bonded pairs or as individual animals. The understanding of their welfare and which applies to each species is best understood by their keepers – not by council. Land size is not an indicator of noise or odour. There are no noise implications with reptiles. Recommended enclosure size varies considerably, along with diet, breeding capacity, and the ability to move excess animals, making the restriction of numbers extremely unwise.

Animal Care Australia notes most Councils have recognised the keeping of reptiles is managed by state/territory native wildlife legislation and as such do not include reptiles in their animal management plans.





Animal Care Australia

Animal Care Australia has engaged with government on a range of issues throughout Australia. The list that follows outlines some of these matters, including parliamentary inquiries, Ministerial, MP, Department Director meetings, appointments as major stakeholders, and numerous submissions in jurisdictions nationally.

Animal Care Australia will continue to stand up for pet and domestic animals and their owners. Here is just some of what we have done and will continue to do:

- ◆ Lobby for higher animal welfare outcomes in welfare Acts
- ◆ Change the narrative of animal welfare from punishment to education
- ◆ Make higher animal welfare the 'norm' among pet owners
- ◆ Oppose restricted breeding legislations.
- ◆ Oppose restrictions on pet numbers that can be kept (now only 5 animals in some Local Councils)
- ◆ Oppose the creation of an unregulated Shelter Industry
- ◆ Introduce education about pet ownership into primary & higher school education curriculums
- ◆ Encourage education on responsible pet ownership, responsible breeding and responsible buying of pets.
- ◆ Lobby for greater funding of education on responsible pet ownership, responsible breeding and responsible buying of pets.
- ◆ Support pets in strata
- ◆ Lobby for greater accountability of animal welfare compliance organisations
- ◆ Oppose Animal Rights Extremist propaganda
- ◆ Oppose Animal Rights Extremist influences on government
- ◆ Oppose 'personhood' rights being provided to animals
- ◆ Encourage research into more alternatives for 1080
- ◆ Encourage expansion of and education about existing alternatives for 1080
- ◆ Support continuation of animals in education arena (zoos, mobile exhibitors etc)
- ◆ Support and legislate for the protection of animal victims of domestic violence
- ◆ Oppose programs that allow the release or continuance of feral animals in the natural environment
- ◆ Support initiatives for the subsidising of de-sexing programs

- ◆ Strengthen animal welfare Acts by removing ambiguity and clearly defining animal cruelty
- ◆ Ensuring species specific Standards (Codes Of Practice) for keeping and breeding are regularly reviewed and maintained
- ◆ Legislate against leaving animals (not just dogs) in hot vehicles
- ◆ Supports the expansion and continuation of native animal keeping with appropriate licensing and welfare standards
- ◆ Oppose trail closures to horse riders, carriage drivers and dog walkers

Our goal is to promote and encourage high standards in all interactions with the animals in our care. To encourage responsible pet ownership and the respectful treatment of all animals in our community.



There are many health benefits of owning a pet. They can increase opportunities to exercise, get outside, and socialise. Regular walking or playing with pets can decrease blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and triglyceride levels. Pets can help manage loneliness and depression by giving us companionship.