

BARC - Service Standard (Euthanasia) Policy

Approval Level:	EMT
Policy Type:	Organisation
Approval Date:	12/04/2022
Review cycle:	4 years
Review Date:	12/04/2026
Responsible Officer:	Coordinator Local Laws and Animal Services
Owner:	Safe and Healthy Environments
Responsible Director:	Health and Wellbeing
Relevant Legislation/Authority:	<i>Local Government Act 1989 Domestic Animal Act 1994 Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 Code of Practice for the Management of Dogs and Cats in Shelters and Pounds</i>
DOCSETID:	4157892

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear service standard for humane euthanasia of animals at BARC, which reflects the City's obligations under the Act and the Code.
- 1.2 The policy seeks to:
 - 1.2.1 provide a clear policy position on euthanasia for staff at BARC and the community;
 - 1.2.2 ensure animal welfare is given due consideration by decision makers;
 - 1.2.3 support staff associated with euthanasia in line with the City's values and behaviours;
 - 1.2.4 ensure the staff meet legislative obligations with respect to animal welfare; and
 - 1.2.5 provide policy support for staff when engaging with Councillors, colleagues, the community, the media and animal welfare organisations.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Euthanasia of animals is a difficult subject to consider, both on ethical and animal welfare grounds.

2.2 Local governments across Victoria have a range of responsibilities under the Act, including the provision of pound services and the responsibility to remove, rehome or sell animals via an animal shelter service following the expiry of the prescribed statutory period.

2.3 This policy has been developed in strict compliance with the Act and the Code.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff and animals at BARC.

4. DEFINITIONS

In this policy:

Act means the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (Vic).

Animal means dog, puppy, cat or kitten.

BARC means the Bendigo Animal Relief Centre.

City means the Greater Bendigo City Council, being a body corporate constituted as a municipal Council under the *Local Government Act 1989* (Vic).

Code means the *Code of Practice for the Management of Dogs and Cats in Shelters and Pounds* developed under section 59 of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (Vic).

Euthanise or **Euthanasia** means to cause the deliberate and painless death of an animal.

Feral means as per S.84O(1) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* where “The Council or person or body holding a cat seized under this Part may destroy the cat as soon as possible after its seizure if (a) the cat does not bear an identification marker or a permanent identification device; and (b) the cat is wild, uncontrollable or diseased.

Operations Manager means a person employed by the City who is responsible for the day to day operation of BARC.

Plan means the written Health Management Plan which has been formulated in consultation with a Veterinary Practitioner and includes protocols (such as approved methods of Euthanasia) which must be adhered to by BARC.

Rehoming means preparing and offering the animal for sale or adoption.

RSPCA means the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals which is an independent, non-government community-based charity which provides animal care and protection services.

Staff means employees, contractors and volunteers engaged by the City.

Veterinary Practitioner means a veterinary practitioner registered under the *Veterinary Practice Act 1997*.

5. PRINCIPLES

- 5.1 The City regards de-sexing, annual registration, microchipping and responsible pet ownership as the key activities for reducing euthanasia rates of animals.
- 5.2 The City will consider opportunities to partner with other organisations to:
- 5.2.1 promote and educate the community on responsible pet ownership and animal welfare issues in order to reduce euthanasia rates;
 - 5.2.2 promote the rehoming of suitable pets with a suitable new owner; and
 - 5.2.3 endeavour to reunite lost pets with their owners.

6. POLICY

6.1 General

- 6.1.1. The City is opposed to all inhumane methods of killing animals.
- 6.1.2. The City will not euthanise any physically healthy and behaviourally sound Animals that are suitable for rehoming.
- 6.1.3. The City upholds the Code and will only euthanise animals because of disease, injury, behaviour, age, or unsuitability for rehoming.
- 6.1.4. Euthanasia of animals by the City will be in strict accordance with:
- (a) the *Domestic Animal Act 1994 (Vic)*;
 - (b) the Code; and
 - (c) the Plan.

6.2 Holding period

In accordance with section 84M of the Act, a person may recover an animal retained at BARC, which the City has decided not to retain custody, within 8 days (or 14 days in the case of an abandoned animal).

6.3 Unclaimed animals

At the conclusion of the statutory period specified in the Act, if any animal is unclaimed it must be:

- 6.3.1 made available for rehoming to a new owner;
- 6.3.2 Euthanised because of disease, injury, behaviour, age or unsuitability for rehoming;
- 6.3.3 placed in appropriate foster care and returned at an appropriate date for rehoming; or

6.3.4 released under a written agreement to a person or body which operates in accordance with the Act to care for and dispose of the Animal, at the discretion of the City's Operations Manager or Veterinary Practitioner.

6.4 Euthanising Animals

6.4.1 Euthanasia of an animal will only be performed by the attending Veterinary Practitioner.

6.4.2 The most appropriate humane method of euthanasia must be determined for each situation, taking into consideration personnel safety, species, number of animals, location, potential degree and length of suffering and available resources.

6.4.3 Euthanasia will be performed in an area that is separated from animal accommodation and will not be carried out in view of any other animals or members of the public unless there is an immediate safety risk to parties involved in undertaking the euthanasia, in which case the Veterinary Practitioner will determine the most suitable cause of action to euthanise the animal.

6.4.4 In the event that an animal is euthanised, BARC must record the following:

- (a) the date the animal was euthanised;
- (b) the reason for the euthanasia; and
- (c) the method used for the animal's euthanasia.

6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The follow table describes the roles and responsibilities of staff at BARC with respect to euthanasia at BARC:

Role	Responsibilities with respect to Euthanasia
Manager Safe & Healthy Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure timely administrative review of this policy. • Ensure the City has engaged a Veterinary Practitioner.
Coordinator Investigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the Operations Manager is suitably trained in line with the Code. • In conjunction with the Operations Manager, develop and review procedures in line with the Code. • Provide support to staff involved in euthanasia processes.
BARC Operations Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-signatory to euthanasia documentation. • Provide support to staff involved in euthanasia processes.
Veterinary Practitioner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorised to make decision to euthanase. • Provide a euthanasia service and direct supervision. • Animal behaviour assessment. • Provide advice to the Manager, Coordinator, Operations Manager and Veterinary Nurse.
Veterinary Nurse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support under supervision to the Veterinary Practitioner.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restraint of animals. • Handling deceased animals. • Animal behaviour assessment. • Update data management system.
Animal Attendants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restraint of animals. • Handling deceased animals. • Animal behaviour assessment. • Update data management system.
Animal Behavioural Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake and report animal behaviour assessments.
Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No involvement

7 RELATED DOCUMENTS

Employees are encouraged to access the related internal documents which are available on the intranet and/or external resources which are available as per the below:

Domestic Animals Act 1994 (Vic)

Code of Practice for the Management of Dogs and Cats in Shelters and Pounds

BARC Health Management Plan

Further information or advice on this policy should be directed to the City's Safe and Healthy Environments Unit

8 HUMAN RIGHTS COMPATIBILITY

The implications of this policy have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

9 ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Business Unit, a change to the name of a Federal or State Government department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be made through consultation with the staff Consultative Committee and with the approval of EMT or where required, resolution of Council.

11. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Date Approved	Responsible Officer	Unit	Change Type	Version	Next Review Date
4 June 2019	CG	Safe & Healthy Environments	New Policy	1	4 June 2020
4 June 2019	Jen Nolan	Governance	Administrative – edited paragraph numbering	2	4 June 2020
12 April 2022	Sam Johnston	Safe & Healthy Environments	Review	3	12 April 2026