

 City of Mount Gambier	<b>ANIMAL MANAGEMENT – UNCLAIMED DOG POLICY</b>	Version No:	1
		Issued:	August 2023
		Next Review:	August 2027

## 1. INTRODUCTION

City of Mount Gambier (Council) is currently managing its own animal impoundment facility at the City of Mount Gambier depot. In accordance with the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*, Council is required to hold dogs for a mandatory period of 72 hours while attempts are made to reunite that dog with its owner. After this period, the animal becomes the responsibility of Council to rehome/sell/euthanise.

This Policy applies to dogs that have been impounded by Council and have not been reclaimed by their owner within the mandatory hold period.

## 2. UNCLAIMED DOGS

Where possible, Council does not impound a seized dog which is registered and that also complies with the requirements outlined in Part 4 of the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* if the owner can collect promptly within the field.

Seized unregistered dogs (including identifiable unregistered dogs) or unidentifiable animals, are taken to Council's Impoundment Facility where they are retained for the mandatory holding period while attempts are made to reunite them with their owner. Council makes every effort to identify the owner/responsible person of the impounded animal prior to the expiration of the mandatory holding period.

Council is committed to working with animal welfare groups/ organisations and other local councils to rehome suitable dogs after the mandatory holding period.

### 2.1. ANIMAL OWNERSHIP

Ownership of a dog remains to the owner until the mandatory holding period has lapsed in accordance with Section 62 of the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*. Ownership of unclaimed dogs is transferred to Council at this time. Council may return the dog to the owner after this mandatory holding period if the owner identifies themselves to Council.

Unclaimed dogs which have not been reclaimed within the mandatory holding period and had ownership transferred to Council, are either:

- (a) Transferred to animal welfare groups/organisations or other local councils for the purpose of rehoming;
- (b) Offered for adoption by Council; or
- (c) Humanely euthanised.

### 2.2. GENERAL REQUIREMENT FOR REHOMING

Council's preferred option is to transfer dogs to animal welfare groups/ organisations who have the appropriate expertise to rehabilitate and rehome animals.

Unclaimed dogs are checked to determine their suitability for transfer having regard to health, behavioural or legislative requirements.

Where a dog is deemed suitable for rehoming and a suitable organisation able to accept that dog into their rehoming program, Council will ensure the following prior to transfer:

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- (a) Microchipping (where applicable);
- (b) Initial veterinary health check and vaccination; and
- (c) Behavioural assessment (where applicable).

Where a dog is deemed suitable for rehoming and is rehomed directly by Council, Council will ensure the following as part of adoption:

- (a) Microchipping (where applicable);
- (b) Initial veterinary health check and vaccination;
- (c) Behavioural assessment (where applicable);
- (d) Free registration to the end of the current registration period, where the dog is rehomed to a resident of the City of Mount Gambier;
- (e) \$100 voucher towards desexing (if entire); and
- (f) provided a voucher for a consult with a dog trainer to assist with the transition and training of the dog (approx. \$50 value).

Council will undertake a screening process to determine suitability of the adopter.

New owners, of dogs rehomed directly by Council, will be required to sign an Adoption Agreement outlining the terms and conditions of this arrangement.

### **2.3. GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR THE TRANSFER OF ANIMALS TO ANIMAL WELFARE GROUPS/ ORGANISATIONS**

Animal welfare groups/ organisations and local councils who have entered into a formal agreement with Council will be contacted to see if they have capacity to take an animal.

The agreement will detail the general conditions for the transfer including but not limited to:

The recipient will:

- (a) Treat all animals in accordance with animal welfare legislation;
- (b) Desex entire dogs before rehoming the animal;
- (c) Adhere to all relevant legislation including Local Laws and Planning Schemes.

Council:

- (a) Is the sole arbitrator in all matters relating to the transfer of animals (all decisions made by Council are final);
- (b) Accepts no liability concerning the health or behavioural status of animals transferred to an animal welfare group/ organisation.

### **2.4. EUTHANASIA**

Circumstances where humane euthanasia may be applicable include, but are not limited to, the following:

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- (a) Where the dog is suffering from injury, disease or sickness to the extent that it is in the best welfare interests of that dog;
- (b) Where animals are vicious, dangerous, unmanageable, fearful or likely to cause harm due to their behaviour or temperament;
- (c) Where the dog is suffering from a serious contagious or infectious disease or sickness;
- (d) Where it is required under Court Order or Destruction Order in accordance with the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*; or
- (e) As otherwise determined by a registered veterinarian.

All humane euthanasia decisions are made in consultation with a registered veterinarian.

Humane euthanasia is undertaken by a registered veterinarian in line with the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*.

### 3. REVIEW & EVALUATION

This Policy is scheduled for review in August 2026; however, will be reviewed as required by any legislative changes which may occur.

### 4. AVAILABILITY OF POLICY

This Policy will be available for inspection at Council's principal office during ordinary business hours and on the Council's website [www.mountgambier.sa.gov.au](http://www.mountgambier.sa.gov.au). Copies will also be provided to interested members of the community upon request, and upon payment of a fee in accordance with Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges.

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File Reference:	AF18/48
Applicable Legislation:	Dog & Cat Management Act 1995 Animal Welfare Act 1985
Reference: Community Plan	Goal 2: Our Location
Related Policies:	Animal Control - Dogs
Related Procedures:	
Related Documents:	Council By-Laws

#### DOCUMENT DETAILS

Responsibility:	General Manager Corporate and Regulatory Services
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