



CITY OF

WHYALLA

'Whyalla, Where the Outback Meets the Sea'

MEMBERSHIP

Mayor Jim Pollock

Cr Colin Carter
Cr Merton Hodge
Cr Bruce Ledo
Cr Rick Santucci
Cr Joanne Waters

Cr Natasha Free
Cr Eddie Hughes
Cr Ruby McGinniss
Cr Jack Velthuizen

NOTICE OF COUNCIL MEETING

TO HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR & MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Section 83 and 84 of the Local Government Act that the next ordinary **COUNCIL MEETING** will be held in the Council Chamber, Darling Terrace, Whyalla on **Monday 20 September 2010** commencing at 5.30 pm.

A copy of the Agenda for the above meeting is supplied as required.

IAN BURFITT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dated: 16 September 2010

REPORT FOR	COUNCIL MEETING
MEETING DATE	20/09/2010
FILE No.	3-170, 0-2
REPORT OF	ACTING MANAGER INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES
15.4.4	REPORT ON ANIMALS EUTHANISED, COST OF EUTHANASIA AND ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF EUTHANASIA AND COSTS

PURPOSE

To inform Council of the number of animals euthanised by Council for the last financial year. To advise of the cost to Council of the present method of euthanasia. To advise Council on the alternative methods of euthanasia of animals and the cost of such.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council authorise the calling of tenders for the provision of euthanasia services for a three year period based on option 1 and 2 as set out in this report.

BACKGROUND

Over the past 19 years, Whyalla Council has euthanised animals via carbon monoxide narcosis. Last financial year, Council euthanised 273 animals, 240 dogs and 33 cats. Of the 240 dogs, 32 were signed over to Council, generally to be euthanised.

Prior to carbon monoxide narcosis, Council euthanised all larger dogs by shooting and cats by a chloroform box.

Alternative methods of euthanasia are:

- Intravenous barbiturate overdose
- Shooting with a bullet to the brain
- Captive bolt (to be followed by injection with barbiturate or bleeding out)

DISCUSSION

Present Euthanasia Method:

Whyalla Council's euthanasia chamber was developed some 20 years ago. The chamber was developed in consultation with Senior Officers of the RSPCA in Adelaide. Also Officers of WorkSafe approved the chamber use.

The main reason I believe this method was chosen was due to the high number of dogs that were being euthanised at the time.

During the financial year 1988/1989, Council picked up 1220 dogs and had to euthanise 933 in that period of which 671 dogs were euthanised by gunshot. Council was engaging a professional shooter and the dogs were euthanised by gunshot to the brain at very close range. This method can affect any person, particularly due to the frequency that was required to occur, and the numbers.

Our euthanasia system, which has not altered during its time, uses an old Holden motor that generates significant levels of carbon monoxide. As requested by the RSPCA officers, the exhaust gas runs through a gravel filter (like a fish tank to remove large particles like soot etc), then a filter to cool the gas so it doesn't burn the animals eyes or nasal passages, then another filter to remove hydrocarbons so the gas it emits is clean air with a sufficient concentration of carbon monoxide to cause death.

The RSPCA Officers oversaw the project and were convinced that it was humane before they signed off on it. The dogs just fell asleep. The filter was designed and introduced at a considerable expense to Council.

Carbon Monoxide – How it Works:

The brain has carbon dioxide receptors which tell the animal to pant and gasp as the levels rise. The brain does not have carbon monoxide receptors at all. Carbon monoxide binds with haemoglobin in the blood, which is how blood carries oxygen to the body so no oxygen get to the cells. Carbon monoxide doesn't trigger brain receptors so the animal doesn't even know there is a problem, until they fall asleep.

Is Carbon Monoxide an Acceptable Method of Euthanasia?

The Australian/New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching issued a guide to euthanasia of laboratory animals in 2001. One of the techniques they considered was carbon monoxide poisoning.

Carbon monoxide is believed to cause loss of consciousness before the animal becomes stressed. Collapse and unconsciousness occurs within 40 seconds, respiratory failure in 120 seconds and cardiac arrest within 5-7 minutes. (Green 1987).

I have viewed the 'You -Tube' video of the euthanasia of dogs in America, as mentioned in several emails received by Council. This is definitely not the way dogs are euthanised at our pound. Our facility accommodates two animals at a time. They can't see each other, and upon death are immediately bagged for disposal.

Current Cost to Council

Currently each animal costs Council \$9.00 to euthanise. In addition to this there is the use of a private vehicle and removal of waste to the landfill site at a cost of \$15/week. Last year this amounted to a total cost of \$3237. If an animal is signed over to Council and received at our facility, we charge \$23.50, or \$31 if Council picks the animal up. Obviously this does not reflect the real cost and is more of contribution to encourage the public to officially sign the dog over to Council rather than abandon the animal on the street.

On one occasion last financial year, a dog escaped from one of our local veterinary clinics. The dog was impounded by Council and the clinic notified where the dog was, as it had been microchipped. They refused to collect the dog and it was euthanised via the gas chamber.

Last financial year Council's animal management services operated at a deficit of \$51,845.

Intravenous Barbiturate Overdose

This is the method that it appears most domestic animals are euthanised by. I understand the procedure is as follows;

- The animal is taken to the euthanasia area.
- The animal may need to be held by a second person while a foreleg of the animal is shaved to clearly expose the vein. (However, I am advised a competent veterinarian can generally see the vein just by wetting the foreleg)
- The animal is then injected with the barbiturate and death occurs soon after.
- The procedure is generally carried out by a veterinary surgeon, or a person trained in the procedure. The drug is only available to veterinarians unless the organisation has been issued with a Dept of Health permit to hold the drug.
- Sometimes with aggressive animals this procedure can be difficult. I believe the animal may be required to be sedated or tranquilised prior to the injection. Many of the dogs and cats that we deal with probably fall in this category.

These animals have mostly been abandoned by their owners and are in unfamiliar surrounds. Occasionally we pick up animals which have been starved, dehydrated and are generally emaciated. I understand there is often difficulty in these animals to obtain a good vein, or the vein collapses when they are attempting to inject the animal.

Advantages

- Good public acceptability
- Painless if done correctly
- Good operator safety
- No risk of ricochet or explosion
- Clean (no mess like firearms)

Disadvantages

- Requires firm restraint of the animal to give it intravenously
- Extremely painful if the animal moves and the drug goes outside the vein
- Obviously very toxic so security risks if council holding the solution
- Not as personal as firearms,
- Carcass is toxic and must be cremated
- Requires two people including a veterinary to administer – very expensive
- Drug must be kept under lock and key and a register kept of its use.
- Aggressive or timid dogs may require tranquilisation or anaesthesia to use it
- Can be difficult to find a vein if the animal is small or in cardiac failure or dehydrated or over weight.

Intravenous Barbiturate Costs

I contacted each of the three veterinary clinics to obtain single prices for a 20kg dog and an average sized cat.

The home visit cost ranges from	\$35 - \$50
The euthanasia procedure for a cat ranges from	\$50 - \$85
The euthanasia procedure for a 20kg dog ranges from	\$50 - \$107
Transportation of the body to Adelaide for cremation	\$77 - \$115

Therefore a Whyalla resident generally pays from \$122 - \$272 to have their animal euthanised and transported to Adelaide for cremation.

If Council were to recommend this method, then depending on the veterinary practise, we may need to purchase a large freezer so we can store the animals, and once a month pay a contractor to take them to the AWL (Animal Welfare League) for cremation.

I have also sought an expression of interest from our three local veterinary clinics for an estimated cost per animal on a contract arrangement for a 12 month period. Of the three only two were in a position to provide submissions.

There are two options for which estimated costs have been supplied. Both clinics provided costs for euthanising the animals. One clinic provided the option of all animals being delivered/surrendered to that clinic for them to re-home the animals, or euthanise them.

Option 1

The vet and an assistant would go to the pound once a week, as required, to euthanise the unclaimed animals and remove them for cremation.

Attendance fee to the pound, up to \$132 per visit.

Euthanasia fee per animal between \$50 (<10kg) and \$65 (>10kg).

Transport costs to Adelaide for cremation may be between \$50 and \$100.

Based on last year's figure of 273 animals, this equates to approximately \$22,000 to \$25,000 per year.

Both submissions differed in that one included a call out fee and the other transport fee for the animals to Adelaide. Further one clinic may require an assistant and the added costs of a large freezer to contain the animals until transport. Equipment may also need to be looked into such as crush cages to secure aggressive dogs or cats for euthanising.

Option 2

One vet provided the option where all animals were surrendered at the expiry of the legal time for Council to hold onto the animals, to the clinic. The vet would then assess each animal's suitability for rehoming. The animal would be health checked, vaccinated, desexed and microchipped, before going to a new home. Unsuitable animals would be euthanised and cremated. The veterinary practise currently charges \$242.40 for a cat and \$264.60 for a dog for a prospective buyer.

The surrender fees Council would incur are \$40 for small dogs (<10Kg) and cats, and \$50 for all others. This equates to between \$11,000 and \$14,000. This option would require Council staff to deliver all the animals to the clinic, which would be an additional cost in officer's time. Also there may be a safety risk for animals which are dangerous or aggressive, and also a flight risk. This occurs when removing the animals from their pens to the vehicle and again at the clinic. Council may also need the requirements of a dog type trailer when moving more than 2 or 3 animals at a time.

Currently the RSPCA regularly views our dogs and carries out a temperament test for animals they believe may be suitable for re-homing. The majority of these dogs are the small ones.

As Council has no facilities to hold cats, all cats abandoned or caught go to the RSPCA facilities. Each cat is checked for a microchip or identification and temperament tested. Feral type cats are generally euthanised immediately, and the rest are returned home or kept for rehoming, as space permits. All animals sold via the RSPCA are temperament tested, desexed and microchipped. Unfortunately the majority of cats detained are euthanised. They appear to be more of a disposable commodity. The RSPCA charges \$170 per cat and \$200 per dog sold. They make minimal profit from this. It is generally the cost of desexing, microchipping and vaccination.

Option 2 where the vet clinic takes all animals may be fraught with danger. Most of the animals we collect are street wise and often escape type artists being, I would suggest a reason they are abandoned in our facilities. Owners don't want to collect them as it will attract Council required seizure and pound fees, and an expiation notice if there is no mitigating circumstances as to why they escaped. If a clinic were to receive income from our animals they would be more inclined to re-home every one. Some of the more unsuitable animals may continue to escape their new owners, or harming their new owners or others. Particularly dogs, this may require Council staff or the RSPCA to again have to deal with problem animals.

Owning an Animal:

Owning an animal (dog or cat) is not a cheap exercise. These animals become family members and should be treated as such. An owner has to be prepared to cover cost such as;

- Purchase price of animal
- Daily feeding of animal
- Annual visits to the vet or as required for other procedures
- Annual dog registrations
- Desexing
- Microchipping

- Having animal washed/groomed
- Boarding when on holidays
- Maintaining fencing where animal is contained
- A kennel or bedding
- Visiting a vet in times illness
- Euthanising animal when old, frail or through accident/illness
- Obedience training

Summary

Last financial year council euthanised 273 animals. 32 dogs were signed over to council by their owners. The remainder were in general abandoned by the owners and left to council to make a decision of their future.

Last financial year the euthanising of these animals cost \$2457.

From the options discussed there are two options available at an additional cost to council.

Option 1

All animals are euthanised by intravenous barbiturate overdose by a veterinary surgeon. The fee for this service will be approximately \$22,000 - \$25,000 per year for council.

Option 2

All animals are after their legal required time in council's facilities will be surrendered to a veterinary clinic for re homing or euthanasia. The fee for this service will be approximately \$11,000 - \$14,000 per year for council. This option will need to be monitored stringently to avoid additional work for both RSPCA officers and council officers, if unsuitable animals are re homed.

If council recommends changing our current practise, we may need to increase the fee to sign a dog over to council, i.e. a user pays type system. Currently council is seen as a relatively cheap option to 'sign over' their dog. If council significantly increase the sign over fee for a dog then we expect some owners may simply abandon their dogs on the street.

The majority of this report and the information contained herein has been in consultation with a veterinary officer.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Financial/Budget

Financial

Yes. If there is a change to the way we euthanise our animals, then the money may be derived from again increasing our dog registration fees 10% next financial year. The maximum registration fee for a dog will increase from \$50.00 to \$55.00

Budget

Yes

Legal

Nil

Staffing/Work Plans

Nil

Environmental

Nil

Social

Nil

Adopted Plans

Strategic Plan Reference – Goal 4, Council Governance – Desired Outcome 4.1

Other

Nil

MARKETING

Nil

Customer Needs Analysis

Nil

Promotion/Communications

Nil

CONSULTATION

The following have been included in the consultation process in the preparation of this Report:

Senior Veterinarian Officer
Dog and Cat Management Board Officer
Whyalla's three Vet Clinics

Staff

Nil

Public

Nil

APPENDICES

Annexure A – Information Sheets from The Dog and Cat Management Board

REPORT AUTHOR



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Registrar of Dogs

AUTHORISED BY



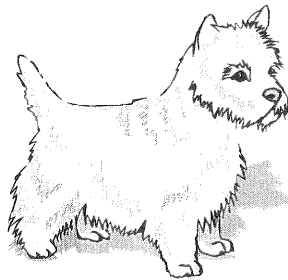
Alan Wilmshurst
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 The Dog and Cat Management Board

INFORMATION SHEET 28

NO SUCH THING AS A *FREE* PUPPY!



The biggest myth in dog ownership is the "Free Puppy" myth. When you look at the costs of dog ownership, you'll realize that your "free" puppy wasn't so "free" after all. Dog ownership costs can vary dependant on the size of your dog, but the different expenses remain the same.

Feeding costs vary widely depending on the size of the dog you have, but you can count on at least \$25.00 for a large bag of dog food. How long this lasts you will differ for each dog size.

Cutting costs on dog food by purchasing cheap brands of food may not be a less expensive alternative either.

CHEAP DOG FOOD BRANDS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO ALLERGY PROBLEMS:-

- Atrointestinal distress,
- Poor immune system due to lack of nutrients,
- Behaviour problems and more.

BASIC CARE

If your dog is healthy, well-cared for and has no accidents throughout his life it can still cost a lot money.

- Vaccines,
- Dental for some dogs
- Annual exams
- Neutering.

GROOMING

While some dogs can go through life without ever needing a professional dog groomer, many dog breeds have a high-maintenance appearance and may be expensive at a Dog Groomer's salon

- Haircuts,
- Nail trimming,
- Bathing

If you want a certain type of dog, then you may be looking at grooming costs.

EXTRAS ALL COST MONEY

- Toys,
- Treats,
- Collar,
- Leash
- Various other accessories.

So much for that "free" puppy. Welcome to the world of dog ownership.

It is best to know exactly what you are getting into before you jump into the Dog World. Even an accident as small as a torn muscle takes on serious implications when applied to a dog. Veterinary costs can be overwhelming and Pet Insurance isn't something many people think about until it's too late.

Handy Phone Numbers

Animal Welfare League - 8268 4188

RSPCA Adelaide - 8231 6931 (A/H Emergency: 8231 2120)

RSPCA Lonsdale - 8382 0888

Produced in conjunction with Council by the Dog and Cat Management Board of SA.

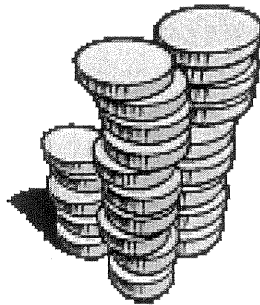
For more information, check out the Dog and Cat Management Boards website at www.dogscats.asn.au

This information is provided for information only and Council is not responsible for any goods or services offered.



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INFORMATION SHEET 10 WHERE DOES OUR REGISTRATION MONEY GO



The office of the Dog and Cat Management Board receive many calls from the public asking the question "Where does our registration money go? Put quite simply, there are ten major reasons why all dog owners must pay registration fees.

Councils in order to expend the money received:

- Provide an identification process for all dogs which allows lost or injured dogs to be re-united with their owners;
- Provide an effective communication process to dog owners and the general public;
- Provide resources to develop dog management programs and to support legislation;
- Provide funding in support of pounds and shelters;
- Provide funding for community education, administrative and research expenses of Councils;
- Encourages desexing by being able to provide a system of subsidising registrations for those owners whose dogs are desexed;
- Provide proof of ownership;
- Support By-Law control;
- Provide an efficient and acceptable service to the community;
- Enable Councils to become members of the Dog and Cat Management Board who provide Councils across the State with:

- information and advice regarding the Act and their responsibilities,
- act as a conduit of information between State and Local Government,
- undertake Radio and Television advertising campaigns to raise the awareness of responsible dog and cat ownership
- produce and provide Councils with a range of brochures and publications
- provide the public with an avenue to utilise when they believe Councils have not acted in accordance with the Law.

It appears that people generally believe that income received from dog registration is spent elsewhere or is put into General Revenue accounts held by Councils.

Section 26(3) of the Act is clear: -

"Money received by a Council under this Act must be expended in the administration or enforcement of the provisions of this Act in relation to dogs."

Other Council responsibilities are set out under the same section of the Act.

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INFORMATION SHEET 37

WHAT IS RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP?

Responsible Dog Ownership means being the best owner/caregiver to your dog that you can be. Much more than "food, water, and shelter", Responsible Dog Ownership is the obligation dog owners have to incorporate their dogs into the community, being a good neighbour, and providing for the needs of their dogs, however varied those needs may be.

RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP MEANS:

- Realizing that a pet is for LIFE, and dedicating yourself to the life of your dog
- Putting the effort into proper care of your puppy (proper veterinary care, vaccinations, de-worming, proper feeding)
- Learning all you can about proper feeding, making healthy choices
- Investing in proper health care throughout your dog's life
- Training your dog through gentle means to be a good canine citizen
- Training your dog not be a nuisance, and helping him achieve that goal
- Teaching your children to respect animals and not abuse them through play (this is also Responsible Parenting)
- Obeying the laws set for your protection and the protection of others, even when your dog "doesn't need a leash".

BY NOT OBEYING THE LAWS, YOU ARE ONLY RUINING IT FOR EVERYONE ELSE

- Not breeding your dog because he is "so cute".
- Coming to terms with the fact that not everybody likes dogs, and asking yourself, what can you do to ensure that your dog is likable, even to them?
- Practicing the answer
- Doing your part to help the pet overpopulation problem and keeping your intact dog at home and away from other intact animals, or neutering him or her to prevent future health issues
- Teaching other humans how to interact with your dog
- Providing your dog with a family and a home, not just food and shelter. Dogs are very social, and isolation from the family will result in an unhappy, and ultimately, unhealthy dog.
- Holding yourself, as the dog owner, liable for whatever damage your dog does, and taking steps to rectify it

In a world where dogs are increasingly seen as "evil" and "vicious", Responsible Dog Ownership is the only thing that will keep Man's Best Friend where he should be - at our sides.

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16. UNSTARRED ITEMS