



Policy Name:	KEEPING OF ANIMALS
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Business Group:	Service Planning & Regulation
Responsible Officer:	Group Manager Service Planning & Regulation
OBJECTIVE	To establish guidelines for animal control.

**LOCAL ORDERS POLICY FOR THE KEEPING OF ANIMALS
(Section 159 of the Local Government Act, 1993)**

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy seeks to inform the Maitland community of Council's regulatory powers concerning the keeping of animals in the Maitland Council area. The Orders Policy aims to:

- a. Minimise the incidence of nuisance being caused to persons;
- b. Protect the welfare of companion and farm animals;
- c. Protect the welfare and habitat of wildlife;
- d. Minimise the disturbance of or damage to protected vegetation; and
- e. Safeguard the environment.

It is well documented that the keeping of companion animals and/or pet animals is usually most beneficial to the well-being of people. Nevertheless, on occasions, complaints are made to Council where animals of an inappropriate kind or number are being kept, or where the animals and their accommodations are not being looked after properly.

It is not intended within this policy to completely regulate the manner in which animals should be kept. It is, however, necessary that this policy should inform the reasonable limits (both statutory and advisory) which apply concerning the maximum number of animals and the circumstances under which they may be kept on premises.

Responsible ownership is a very important component of nuisance control, and this document also contains advice to the animal owner regarding their responsibilities to prevent a nuisance from occurring.

SCOPE



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This policy applies to animals kept for domestic purposes as companion animals, pets, or for hobby interests.

The principals contained in the prescriptive requirements will also apply to the keeping of animals for commercial purposes including boarding, breeding, grooming, caring, treatment, training, racing, exhibiting, trading or selling.

However, where it is intended to keep animals for any commercial purposes, it is necessary that a development application be submitted to Council and planning consent obtained. Consent to the operation of Commercial Animal Management Establishments may not be allowed where Council considers that the proposal would be harmful to the amenity of the locality.

This policy relates to Order Numbers 18 and 21 of Chapter 7 of the Local Government Act, 1993.

2. OBJECTIVES

- a. To inform the community of the main statutory restrictions and acceptable limits which apply to the keeping of certain animals for domestic purposes.
- b. To give guidance and advice to persons enquiring as to the keeping of animals for domestic purposes.
- c. To establish local standards, acceptable to the community, for the keeping of animals.
- d. To publicly notify the circumstances that the Council will consider in determining whether to serve an Order under Section 124 of the Local Government Act, 1993 to prohibit, restrict or in some other way, require things to be done regarding the keeping of animals.

3. PRESCRIPTIVE REQUIREMENTS

The number of animals that may be kept at a premises should not exceed the number shown as appropriate to the kind of animal listed in the table included with this policy.

The kind of animal that is suitable to be kept at any premises will be determined having regard for the size of the available yard area and the distance to the nearest dwelling or other prescribed building. Certain statutory requirements also apply as noted in the table.

It should not be assumed that animals of all kinds may be kept on premises which are part of a multiple dwelling allotment. Where a dwelling is owned within a Strata Plan, it will be necessary for the rules of the Body Corporate to be examined for requirements relevant to the keeping of animals.

Animals should be kept in a manner which does not:

- Create unclean or unhealthy conditions for people or for the animals
- Attract or provide a harbourage for vermin
- Create offensive noise or odours
- Cause a drainage nuisance or dust nuisance
- Create waste disposal problems or pollution problems
- Create an unreasonable annoyance to neighbouring residents or fear for safety
- Cause nuisance due to proliferation of flies, lice, fleas or other insects.

Suitable shelter(s) should be provided for all animals. Certain kinds of animals are required to be kept in cages to prevent escape or attack by predators. Generally, other animals are to be securely enclosed with adequate fencing to prevent escape.

Certain animal shelters should not be erected or located at a premises without the prior approval of Council. Please contact Council's Department of Planning and Regulation for further details.

Design Guidelines for the size, layout and construction of animal shelters are produced by the various animal welfare organisations and the Department of Agriculture. These may be adopted from time to time as supplements to this policy.

4. COUNCIL'S POWERS TO CONTROL AND REGULATE THE KEEPING OF ANIMALS

Generally, Council's powers to control and regulate the keeping of animals is provided under Section 124 of the Local Government Act, 1993 and the Local Government (General) Regulation, 1993.

The Council may, in the appropriate circumstances, issue an Order to:

- prohibit the keeping of various kinds of animals
- restrict the number of various kinds of animals to be kept at a premises
- require that animals be kept in a specific manner.

The Council may also issue Orders requiring:

- demolition of animal shelters built without the prior approval of Council
- the occupier to do or refrain from doing such things as are specified so as to ensure that land or premises are placed or kept in a safe or healthy condition.

It is advised that Council can exercise further controls over animals under the following Acts:

- The Companion Animals Act, 1998
- The Protection of the Environment Operations Act, 1997
- The Impounding Act, 1993
- The Food Act, 2003 (prohibits animals to be kept where food is handled for sale).

Owners of certain restricted breeds and/or dangerous dogs have additional responsibilities and control requirements to those listed in this Policy. These requirements are outlined in the Companion Animals Act, 1998 and Companion Animals Regulation 1999.

5. GIVING OF ORDERS BY COUNCIL

Generally, where a problem is identified with the keeping of animals and it can not be resolved by consultation, the Council will proceed to issue notice of its intention to serve an Order. Normally a person will be given opportunity to make representations to Council prior to a formal Order being issued. In situations where urgency is required, an emergency Order may be issued without prior notice.

6. TABLE OF REQUIREMENTS

The following table indicates the essential requirements and relevant considerations regarding the keeping of animals.

KIND OF ANIMAL	MAXIMUM NUMBER (Excludes Offspring to 3 months of age)	MINIMUM DISTANCE (from certain buildings) (See Note A)	APPLICABLE REGULATIONS AND OTHER ADVISORY MATTERS
Dogs	2	-	<p>The Companion Animals Act, 1998 requires registration and effective control of dogs at all times. Adequate fencing is essential.</p> <p>The Council may approve requests to keep additional dogs where adequate yard size relative to the size and number of dogs, proper care, and desexing can be demonstrated. RSPCA recommendation.</p>
Cats	2	-	<p>More than 2 cats will not be appropriate in many situations.</p> <p>Compliance with desexing, use of</p>



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			identity collars with multiple bells, proper care, and the restriction of access to outdoors at night will be relevant factors in determining whether more than two cats may be kept at a premises. RSPCA recommendation.
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KIND OF ANIMAL	MAXIMUM NUMBER (Excludes Offspring to 3 months of age)	MINIMUM DISTANCE (from certain buildings) (See Note A)	APPLICABLE REGULATIONS AND OTHER ADVISORY MATTERS
Poultry, domestic and guinea fowl	10	4.5 m	Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 applies.
Poultry, other than fowls, including ducks, geese, turkeys, peafowl and other pheasants	10	30 m	<p>Hard paving must be provided under roosts in poultry houses if within 15.2 metres of a dwelling, public hall or school.</p> <p>Poultry yards must be enclosed to prevent escape of poultry and be kept free of rats and mice</p> <p>Roosters should not be kept where crowing will cause offensive noise</p>
Pigeons NOTE: To establish the permissible number of pigeons by locality of premises, it will be necessary for Council Officers to assess the site conditions.	As appropriate to species, size of cage, aviary or bird room.	6m	<p>Nuisance due to noise and also free flight of pigeons is to be minimised. Lofts must be constructed of hard paving with a smooth surface and graded to drain. Open lofts are not permitted.</p> <p>Lofts are to be kept clean at all times. Manure is to be cleaned up daily and disposed of correctly.</p> <p>Keepers of more</p>



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			<p>than fifty (50) birds are to be members of official or registered avicultural societies. Upon complaint, Council is to liaise with society representatives/officials to determine suitable actions to resolve the complaint.</p>
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KIND OF ANIMAL	MAXIMUM NUMBER (Excludes Offspring to 3 months of age)	MINIMUM DISTANCE (from certain buildings) (See Note A)	APPLICABLE REGULATIONS AND OTHER ADVISORY MATTERS
Birds, including canaries, budgerigars, quails, finches and parrots	30	3 m	Cages and aviaries must be of appropriate size and regularly cleaned.
	30+	6 m	National Parks and Wildlife permit is required to keep many native birds. Exemptions include budgerigar, zebra finch, galah and sulphur crested cockatoo.
			Noisy birds should be restricted in number.
Sulphur crested cockatoo and long billed corella	2 portable cages	3 m	
	4 aviary	6 m	Sulphur crested cockatoo and long-billed corella are likely to be noisy if kept as single caged birds.
Rabbits	1	3 m	Must be domestic breed and kept in a cage. Do not release into the environment. Restriction on number is imposed by the NSW Department of Primary Industries under the Rural Lands Protection Act, 1998.
Ferrets	-	-	The keeping of ferrets is not recommended. However, where proper care (including appropriate secure cages) is available, the keeping of ferrets may be approved.



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Pet rats, mice and guinea pigs	12 of each variety	3 m	Must be kept in appropriate cages and not released into the environment.
Sheep and goats	1 (one animal per one tenth hectare of land as a general guide)	6m	Billy goats should not ordinarily be kept on residential premises. These animals are not to be slaughtered at the premises where they are kept.
Pigs	1	60m	Local Government (General) Regulation, 2005 applies to pigs. The keeping of pigs is not considered appropriate in residential areas.

KIND OF ANIMAL	MAXIMUM NUMBER (Excludes Offspring to 3 months of age)	MINIMUM DISTANCE (from certain buildings) (See Note A)	APPLICABLE REGULATIONS AND OTHER ADVISORY MATTERS
Horses and Cattle	1 (one animal per half hectare of pastured land as a general guide)	9 m	<p>Local Government (General) Regulation, 2005 applies. A greater separation distance may be required by resolution of Council in each particular case. Fencing must be strong and durable to prevent escape. Stables and sheds must be hard paved and graded to drain.</p> <p>The keeping of horses and cattle on residential properties is not considered appropriate.</p>
Reptiles	As appropriate in the circumstances	As appropriate in the circumstances	<p>National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974 and Fauna Protection regulations place a general prohibition on the keeping of reptiles. Advice on the keeping of reptiles should be sought from the Department of Environment and Climate Change (NPWS) in all cases.</p> <p>All species must be adequately housed to prevent escape. The keeping of snakes may cause concern to neighbours.</p>

<p>Fish, aquarium and pond</p>	<p>As appropriate in the circumstances</p>	<p>As appropriate in the circumstances</p>	<p>Water is to be maintained clean and at sufficient levels.</p> <p>Ponds are to be fenced in accordance with Councils Pool Fencing Code if more than 300 mm deep.</p> <p>Ponds are not to provide a breeding ground for mosquitoes and other insects.</p>
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NOTES:

1. The distances indicated in the third column of the above table are to be measured in metres from the animal yard or enclosure to the nearest dwelling, public hall, school or premises used for the manufacture, preparation, sale or storage of food.
2. Animal includes a mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian or fish. It does not include a human being (as defined by the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1979).
3. Schedule 2 Part 5 of the Local Government (General) Regulation, 2005 specifies minimum standards for the keeping of animals. The distances specified (except in the case of pigs) may be varied at a meeting of the Council and notified in writing to the occupier of premises in a particular case.