



LATE AGENDA
FOR THE
EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

23 JULY 2020

CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

L.1 Preliminary Review of the Wingecarribee Animal Shelter Project

Report Author: Coordinator Regulatory Services
Authoriser: Acting Deputy General Manager

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of issues and challenges at the Wingecarribee Animal Shelter, in particular those relating to statutory obligations, the role of volunteer groups and the Memorandum of Understanding with Friends of Wingecarribee Animal Shelter, the operational model and levels of service, and Work Health and Safety.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT:

Council engage a suitably qualified external consultant to undertake a detailed review of the current operations of the Wingecarribee Animal Shelter with regarding the following matters:

- a. Compliance with Statutory obligations and Council policy in relation to levels of service and service standards***
- b. Volunteer roles and responsibilities and the Memorandum of Understanding between the Friends of the Wingecarribee Animal Shelter (FOWAS) and Council***
- c. Operational model and level of service benchmarked against similar councils***
- d. Work Health and Safety conditions for staff and volunteers.***

REPORT

BACKGROUND

At the Council meeting held on 9 June 2021 the Interim Administrator requested a review been undertaken of the Wingecarribee Animal Shelter (the Shelter), in particular statutory obligations, the role of volunteer groups and the Memorandum of Understanding with Friends of Wingecarribee Animal Shelter and Work Health and Safety.

REPORT

The Shelter provides an important piece of community infrastructure that enables Council to comply with its obligations under the *Companion Animals Act 1998*. The Shelter also provides a facility that enables high quality care of impounded companion animals and



facilitates community participation in the care and welfare of animals that are seeking rehoming opportunities under Council's Alternatives to Euthanasia Policy.

Council has acknowledged that the current Shelter facilities requires significant capital upgrades to ensure compliance with welfare standards and also to overcome significant land use conflict issues being experienced associated with its current location. As the current proximity to other industrial uses such as the Resource Recovery Centre becomes increasingly problematic due to dust, noise and odour, it has also become apparent that significant injection of capital into the upgrade of the current facility was not feasible and instead an alternative site would need to be purchased that removes the current land use conflicts.

As such, as a part of the adoption of the Operational Plan and Budget 2020/21 on 8 July 2020 Council resolved to authorise the creation of an Animal Shelter reserve to be established with an opening balance of \$5.2 Million. Following this, at a meeting held on 11 November 2020 Council resolved to purchase 1 Bowman Road, Moss Vale for a new Animal Shelter.

Concept plans and animal capacity studies have been undertaken by Council in relation to the construction of a new Animal Shelter facility. In addition to this information, Council staff are currently undertaking an assessment of the site to accommodate potential dual construction on the vacant land and will prepare a further report to Council outlining the concept plan, future needs assessment and final endorsement of the operational model subject to an independent review.

While the issues and concerns in relating to the Shelter location and facility are in the process of being addressed, a preliminary review of the Shelter highlights there are a number of issues and challenges that are currently impacting on the operation of the Shelter. Key issues that need further and/or independent review relate to the following:

1. Statutory Compliance - Councils obligations for the operation of the Shelter are legislated within the *Companion Animals Act 1998*, the *Companions Animals regulation, Impounding Act 1993* and *Prevention of Cruelty of Animals Act 1997* (Boarding facilities). In addition, there are model codes that oversee the operation of Shelters, such as the NSW Department of Primary Industries 'NSW Animal Welfare Code of Practice No – 5 Dogs and Cats in animals boarding establishments'. It is critical that service levels and service standards are compliant with statutory obligations.
2. Council Policy Compliance – a number of Council policies govern the operations of the Shelter, this includes the Alternatives to Euthanasia Policy, Code of Conduct and Procurement Policy. It is important that service levels and service standards are consistent with Council policies.
3. Volunteer Groups and the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) - the Shelter has two main volunteer groups currently associated with its facility:
 - The Friends of the Wingecarribee Animal Shelter (FOWAS)
 - Registered council volunteers such as the dog walking group and cat cuddlers.

The volunteer groups have a long-standing relationship with the Shelter, and provide additional services including, fundraising, advertisement, rehoming opportunities, fittings, food purchasing, prescription food, bedding, dog training, and supplementary vet service funding, daily dog walking, cat enrichment.



An MoU was signed for 24 months on 8 February 2019 between Council and FOWAS with the objective to ensure:

- Provision of high levels of animal welfare for the animals within the care of the Shelter
- Clarity of positions including roles and responsibilities for both Council and FOWAS
- Continuation of a strong and continued working relationship between Council and FOWAS.

The MoU was due for review in February 2021 and this review has not yet commenced.

4. Operational Model and Level of Service – Council resolved at its meeting on 26 June 2019 to manage and operate the Shelter in-house. As a part of a broader organisational review a benchmarking exercise regarding the operational model and levels of service is critical.
5. Work Health and Safety – the relocation of the Shelter will address Work Health and Safety conditions for Council staff and the Shelter volunteers in the future. It is essential that Council is aware of current Work Health and Safety concerns at that these are addressed.

COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

Community Engagement

Nil.

Internal Communication and Consultation

Finance, Assets, Property, Regulatory Services and Town Planning.

External Communication and Consultation

Nil

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

- **Environment**

There are no environmental issues in relation to this report.

- **Social**

There are no social issues in relation to this report.

- **Broader Economic Implications**

There are no broader economic implications in relation to this report.

- **Culture**

There are no cultural issues in relation to this report.



- **Governance**

There are no governance issues in relation to this report.

COUNCIL BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications as a result of this report.

RELATED COUNCIL POLICY

Alternatives to Euthanasia Policy

Memorandum of Understanding of the friends of Wingecarribee Animal Shelter

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments to this report.

Lisa Miscamble
General Manager

Tuesday 22 June 2021