Mansfield Emergency Animal Welfare Plan

A COMPLIMENTARY – PLAN OF
THE MANSFIELD SHIRE
MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Updated June 2022

This plan was initially adopted by the Mansfield Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee at their meeting on 26 August 2014 and presented to Mansfield Shire Council at its ordinary Meeting on 21 October 2014:

Version Control Table

Version number	Date of issue	Author(s)	Brief description of change
1.0	May 2013	G. Washusen	Draft
	15 July 2013	K.Murphy J.Fleming G.Washusen L.Manning	DELWP input
	31 July 2013		DELWP, 4SITE input. OHS (7.10)
Finalised Adopted	August 2014 21 Oct 2014	K.Murphy Proof read and update	Inserted feedback DELWP Dr Le Manning Public Release for comment. Council Resolution
Review Review	Nov 2015 Dec 2016/ Jan 2017	K.Murphy K.Murphy & J Fleming	Update to DEPI to DELWP & DEDJTR, Update to delete '4 Site' and add Council Local Laws Minor update re Officers & Add reference to Mansfield A&P Society re horse relief options.
1.2	31/1/17	K.Murphy	Released Update to Crisisworks and Web page
	21/2/2017	S Arndt	Minor updates throughout, MECC Central to Crisisworks. Updates to sections 7.6, 8.3, 8.5, 9.1
	NA	KM	See p 46 RAC Definition added
	8 June 2021	S Hare	Minor updates including the requirement to open a MECC
	16 June 2022	KM	Citing changed from Sub-plan to Complimentary plan following changes to MEMP & basic review only

Guide / Quick Reference;

The purpose of the Mansfield Emergency Animal Welfare Plan (MEAWP) is to assess, advise and assist the community with animal and stock welfare issues during and following an emergency incident.

This Plan also provides for the development and implementation of Municipal arrangements for animal and stock welfare during an emergency.

This Plan describes local arrangements for animal, stock and wildlife welfare emergency management.

Extract Page 7

This Plan emphasises that animal welfare is the primary responsibility of the owner (or person in charge). Residents need to develop their own personal emergency plan including provision for their animals and livestock and enact their plan early during an emergency (or Code Red day).

Animal owners, Animal Welfare Agencies and the Mansfield Shire Council have a "duty of care" to plan and provide for the needs of animals, particularly in an emergency.

This Plan looks at the roles, responsibilities and arrangements between the various stakeholders within the Mansfield Shire for the delivery of all emergency response, relief and recovery activities in relation to animal welfare. It puts in place various activities and processes so that animal welfare is provided for both during and after an emergency event.

Contact Details

DEDJTR Ag Vic Tatura	5833 5222
	136 186
Mansfield Shire Council	5775 8555
RSPCA Victoria	9224 2222

During an incident, the Incident Controller will assume overall control of the emergency response and may call upon support agencies for assistance.

CONTENTS

1. Purpose

This Plan should be used in conjunction with the Municipal Emergency Management Plan and the Council Emergency Relief and Recovery Guideline.

The purpose of the Mansfield Emergency Animal Welfare Plan (MAEWP) is to assess, advise and assist the community with animal and stock welfare issues during and following an emergency incident.

This Plan also provides for the development and implementation of Municipal arrangements for animal and stock welfare during an emergency.

The Mansfield MAEWP was developed pursuant to section 20(1) of the *Emergency Management Act 1986* and the State Level *Victorian Animal Welfare Plan*. The MAEWP was approved by the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee and adopted by Council on the date indicated on the title page.

Local Laws Officers and other personnel with roles and responsibilities in emergency management have been authorised by Council through their appointment and delegation of legislated functions and powers of Council.

Key legislation covering functions, powers and authorisations of officers dealing with animal welfare during emergencies includes the following Acts and regulations:

- *Local Government Act 1989*
- *Emergency Management Act 1986*.
- *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986*
- *Environmental Protection Act 1986*
- *Domestic Animals Act 1994*
- *Impounding of Livestock Act 1994*

The *Emergency Management Manual Victoria (EMMV)* describes Victoria's emergency management arrangements and includes the following:

- Introduction to the Emergency Management Arrangements
- State and Regional Emergency Management Planning
- Guidelines for Municipal Emergency Management Planning
- State Emergency Response Plan & Recovery Plan
- Emergency Management Agency Roles
- *Emergency Management Act 1986 and 2013*.

2. Scope

Animals play a significant role in the lives of residents of Mansfield Shire. Residents own more than 200,000 head of livestock (ABS 2011)
-   including 162,000 sheep, 560 dairy cattle and 45,800 beef cattle.
-   The Shire, being a gateway to "The High Country", is popular for recreational horse activity with several horse and pony clubs and a horse racing club.

It is estimated in excess of 450 horses are owned by landholders.

Mansfield is also unique in that it hosts a privately owned zoo containing exotic animals like lions and monkeys. The Mansfield Zoo has its own emergency management plan that caters for the welfare of resident animals.

Domestic pets are also common in the municipality which includes 450 registered cats and 2500 registered dogs. While it is difficult to quantify wildlife populations in a similar manner, human interest in the welfare of native animals is reflected in the 340 wildlife shelters and 363 foster carers currently authorized to rehabilitate wildlife in Victoria, and the 7,000 native animals which are treated in Victorian shelters each year (Victorian Emergency Animal Welfare Plan, Wilson and Rosewarne, DEPI).

This Plan describes local arrangements for animal, stock and wildlife welfare emergency management and addresses the following risk areas:
- Bushfire
- Animal disease
- Wind/Storm damage
- Flood events
- Transport accidents involving livestock (eg. livestock truck rollover)
- Any event requiring emergency evacuation of residents with their animals

The Victorian Bushfire's Royal Commission (VBRC) noted that the bonds people had with their pets and stock directly impacted upon their decision making and as a direct result their safety during emergencies.

The VBRC stated:

"*There were also a small number of cases in which people died after refusing to leave without their pets and animals or delaying their departure for too long because of concern for their animals. Evidence demonstrates that the strong ties people have with their homes and their animals have a big impact on their decision making.*"*(Extract from the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission: Fire Preparation, Response and Recovery, Final Report Volume II)*

Further, the Commission noted *"There does not appear to be a coordinated approach to animal welfare during relief operations. Improving agency coordination would help to provide more effective relief to all animals regardless of whether they are wildlife, stock, domestic animals or pets. There is a good argument to address the welfare of all animals holistically in the Emergency Management Manual Victoria". (Bushfires Royal Commission- final report - Vol 2, Ch 8 pp 345).*

Animal owners, animal welfare agencies and the Mansfield Shire Council have a "duty of care" to plan and provide for the needs of animals, particularly in an emergency. This Plan looks at the roles, responsibilities and arrangements between the various stakeholders within the Mansfield Shire for the delivery of all emergency response, relief and recovery activities in relation to animal welfare. It puts in place various activities and processes so that animal welfare is provided for both during and after an emergency event.

This Plan emphasises that animal welfare is the primary responsibility of the owner (or person in charge). Residents need to develop their own personal emergency plan including provision for their animals and livestock and enact their plan early during an emergency (or Code Red day).

This Plan includes contact directories, activation and communication procedures and the roles and responsibilities of municipal Local Laws officers and other external agencies providing animal and stock welfare and related services in an emergency.

Standard operating procedures (SOPs) at the rear of this Plan, address some key activity areas.

In some emergencies listed under the EMMV, such as bushfire, floods and storm impacts on animal welfare may be incidental to the broader emergency. If animals are impacted during these emergencies, the EMMV details that:

- DEDJTR is the primary agency for animal welfare (other than wildlife) support services; and

- DELWP …is the primary agency to respond to wildlife welfare caused by a defined emergency (including wildlife affected by fire)

Animal and stock emergency welfare management planning is a key part of Council's all agencies, 'all hazards' approach to municipal emergency management.

3. Audit

This *MAEWP was initially developed as a* sub-plan of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan however with the recent amendments to legislation and the adoption of the current MEMP this plan is now cited as a Complimentary Plan*.

4. Plan development, endorsement, testing and review

The Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) has developed the Animal and Stock Emergency Welfare Plan (MAEWP).

This Plan exists and operates within the context of Commonwealth, State and Municipal emergency management arrangements. The Plan should be read in conjunction with the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP).

Officers with roles and responsibilities in municipal emergencies should have a comprehensive knowledge of this Plan prior to an emergency.

The Plan will be reviewed annually and updated further as follows:

- Reviewed following any emergency event involving activation of the Plan or
- Reviewed following a briefing or exercise that identifies issues in the Plan.

A record of amendments and/or version control will be maintained.

5. Aim and Objectives and Principles

The aims of this Plan are to:

- Contribute to enhanced public safety and community resilience through effective planning and management of animals in emergencies, and
- Ensure animals are better considered and protected from suffering during and following emergencies.

To achieve these aims, this Plan will:
- Support and assist the Municipal Emergency Management Plan.
- Define the roles and responsibilities of key agencies and stakeholders
- Identify triggers for activation
- Co-ordinate Local Laws functions and animal rescue and/or shelter during an emergency
- Encourage and facilitate community awareness about the need for self-managed animal plans during an emergency
- Increase community knowledge and confidence that animal welfare will be considered and managed during an emergency
- Facilitate the hygienic management and disposal of animal waste and carcasses during an emergency
- Consider immediate animal welfare assistance for animals and owners presenting at Emergency Relief Centres
- Provide direction to the Animal Welfare Team

In implementing this Plan the following principles also apply:
- The safety and welfare of all people is the overarching priority at all times.
- The responsibility for the welfare of animals at all times remains with the owner or person in charge of an animal.
- Emergency arrangements for animal welfare do not override normal legislative functions, however the circumstances may call for discretion.
- This Plan does not replace animal welfare arrangements described in existing emergency plans (ie. AUSVETPLAN).
- While arrangements described in this Plan are typical, it is recognised that a Control Agency may recommend additional or alternative actions at the incident, regional or state level to meet the needs of the particular emergency.
- Upon activation of the Plan, an Animal Welfare Team, (a combination of appropriate Agency personnel, Rangers, Administrative Support staff and/or skilled animal handlers, led by the Animal Welfare Coordinator) will be considered to deal with the animal welfare component of the emergency.

6. Plan deployment

This Plan may be activated following any emergency as described within the Municipal Emergency Management Plan:

- at the request of the Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO)
- at the request of the Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM)

- when Council decides to open a Municipal Emergency Co-ordination Centre (MECC)
- when an Emergency Relief Centre is opened
- when a need for carcass disposal is identified
- when there is a need to co-ordinate a livestock water supply or donated fodder, supplies, etc

Upon activation of this Plan the Senior Coordinator Community Safety or delegate will take on the role of Animal Welfare Coordinator and engage agency personnel, Local Laws Officers and admin staff appropriate to the emergency.

The Animal Welfare Coordinator will notify the following personnel, or their deputies, of emergency incidents and circumstances that require (or may require) activation of this Plan:
- MEM
- MEMO
- MFPO
- MRM
- DEDJTR Animal Welfare EMLO(local or in the ICC or MECC)

7. Responsibilities of animal owners, managers and carers

7.1 Emergency planning

Planning prior to an emergency event ensures best practice is achieved. A person in charge of an animal has primary responsibility (duty of care) to ensure it is protected from unnecessary pain or suffering.

For those in charge of animals, including domestic animal owners, livestock owners and wildlife shelter operators and foster carers, planning for emergencies is critical. Personal safety plans and household or property plans should include contingencies for animals that will either remain on the property or be evacuated during an emergency.

It is acknowledged that in the event of an emergency, standards of animal care may be compromised. Those in charge of animals may have to evacuate quickly, potentially leaving animals behind and may be restricted in their ability to care for animals.

For this reason, the underpinning principle in addressing animal welfare in an emergency is for those in charge to take pre-emptive action by planning for animal needs and leaving early so that welfare problems can be avoided or minimised.

DEDJTR and DELWP will work with other agencies to promote consistency of animal welfare arrangements within the various tiers of emergency management plans. This includes documentation of appropriate emergency animal welfare arrangements in MEMPs and associated emergency animal welfare sub-plans through participation on Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committees.

7.2 Animal Owner or Person In Charge of Animal or Livestock

The animal owner or the person in charge of the animal ultimately has responsibility for the welfare of that animal. This includes providing proper and sufficient food, water and shelter for every animal under their care.

Consideration needs to be given to people who are under great stress and may have been displaced from their homes or property. Assistance and guidance of what is needed to care for their animals during and after the emergency may be needed for a large number of animal owners, depending on the extent of the emergency.

Planning for an emergency should include arrangements for animals, and personal safety plans and property plans should be developed, practised and implemented.

Animal considerations include:
- Animal identification – microchip or ear tag, collar
- Evacuating or relocating animals early – identification, health records, food and water, transport, agistment and boarding options
- Needs of animals remaining on property – refuge area, containment, feed and water supply (including planning for loss of electricity)
- Needs of surviving animals – treatment, containment, feed and water supply, electricity
- Contact numbers for animal welfare – local vets, DEDJTR , DELWP, Council

8. Mansfield Shire Council – roles and responsibilities

The role of the Council Animal Welfare Team, through the Animal Welfare Coordinator will be to respond to animal welfare matters and maintain orderly animal management;

(a) at relief centres by:
- Liaising directly with the MEMO, MRM & DEDJTR Animal Welfare EMLO as to their requirements involving animals
- Responding to requests for service via Crisisworks
- Ensuring that animals are properly contained and/or secure at relief centres
- Re-directing large animals (horses, cattle, alpacas etc.) to sites more appropriate for livestock
- Providing information and advice to pet owners about emergency food supplies, water and/or animal care
- Facilitating assistance from people and/or organisations with skills or capacity in the field of animal welfare
- Liaising with official or volunteer animal specialists to ensure consistency of focus and advice to attendees in regard to animals and their care
- Maintaining a record of animals presented at a Relief Centre
- Communicating with other involved agencies

(b) In other areas:
- Liaise closely with the MEMO and DEDJTR Animal Welfare EMLO regarding animal welfare needs
- Refer all animal welfare reports to the DEDJTR Animal Welfare EMLO for action
- Arranging and coordinating appropriate resources for the management, removal, diversion, relocation or transport of animals

- Facilitate clean stock drinking water for owners to access eg. stand pipes
- Manage wandering stock and domestic pets on roads and public spaces under Council control
- Ensure that livestock are adequately supplied with food and water
- Manage the distribution of donated fodder and animal welfare goods
- Manage dangerous stock and domestic pets posing risk to the public
- Coordination of clean-up activities, including disposal of dead animals
- Communicate with other involved agencies
- Provide the community with information and advice in conjunction with or utilising DEDJTR
- Conduct post-impact assessment of animal and stock welfare risks in the community in conjunction with DEDJTR

The following range of functions represents the respective roles that may need to be performed in an emergency.

MERC

Liaise with Incident Control Centres, DEDJTR Animal Welfare Liaison Officers, and the MEMO regarding known and anticipated animal welfare needs in the Municipality.

MEMO

Liaise with MERC, Animal Welfare Coordinator (AWC) and DEDJTR Animal Welfare EMLO regarding known and anticipated animal welfare needs in the Municipality.

MRM

Liaise with the MEMO regarding activation and functionality of Emergency Relief Centre/s. Liaise with the AWC and DEDJTR Animal Welfare EMLO regarding animal welfare needs at the Relief Centre.

Local Laws Officers / Rangers

Local Laws Officers will be responsible for:
- Managing wandering domestic animals and stock in accordance with Councils policies and procedures.
- Logging animals presented to Relief Centres
- Reporting animal welfare needs to the Animal Welfare Coordinator

During activation of this Plan, Council resources may be insufficient to maintain normal services. However other Councils may have the capacity to provide extra resources on request. If an emergency has the potential to reduce essential Local Laws services, the Animal Welfare Coordinator will liaise with the MEMO seeking resources external to the Shire to maintain provision of service.

8.1 Business Continuity

During an emergency event, Mansfield Shire Council will enact its Business Continuity Plan to maintain services as far as possible to meet the requirements of residents. However, during an emergency, animal welfare services will take priority over other Local Laws functions unless public safety is otherwise compromised. Assistance will be sought in the instance of an excessive case load to maintain business continuity.

If a large and complex emergency event occurs within the shire, the Animal Welfare Coordinator can request additional help from other Councils to deal with the

emergency situation allowing the Local Laws Officers/rangers to deal with normal animal welfare and other Local Laws services.

9. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

9.1 Command, control and coordination

Victorian emergency response management operates within a three tiered framework – state, regional and incident. Victoria also bases its emergency response arrangements on the management functions of control, command and coordination which are broadly described as:

- Control - the overall direction of response activities in an emergency, operating horizontally across agencies.
- Command - the internal direction of personnel and resources of an agency, operating vertically within the agency.
- Coordination - the bringing together of agencies and resources to ensure effective response to and recovery from emergencies.

A control agency is the agency responsible for leading the response to a particular type of emergency. Part 7 of the *EMMV* addresses emergency management agency roles, including defining control agencies and key support agencies for response.

9.2 DEDJTR Animal Welfare Commanders

The State Animal Welfare Commander (SAWC) is in place at all times. The SAWC is supported by Regional Animal Welfare Commanders (RAWC).

RAWCs are the initial point of contact to address animal welfare needs in the event of an emergency. Where an emergency has the potential to impact animal welfare the RAWC will liaise with the Incident Controller and the local government Municipal Emergency Response Officer (MEMO) as a member of the Emergency Management Team (EMT) established for the incident to establish a Common Operating Picture (COP) with respect to animal welfare.

In level 2 or 3 incidents with significant animal welfare impacts an Incident Animal Welfare Commander may be appointed to lead DEDJTR animal welfare operations and coordinate animal welfare activities for the incident.

The SAWC is responsible for:

- Actively monitoring the potential risks to animal welfare as a consequence of current and predicted conditions including weather and the status of existing emergency incidents across the state;

- Liaising with relevant animal welfare agencies and organisations including DELWP, AVA, RSPCA, MAV, VFF and local government to enable effective and timely preparedness and delivery of animal welfare support services during an emergency;

- Overseeing the maintenance of the COP with respect to animal welfare.

- Ensuring DEDJTR's emergency animal welfare operations are properly resourced, with appropriate management structures in place at the state, regional and incident levels;

- Ensuring that the welfare of animals is appropriately considered during emergency response and relief operations, in accordance with the Plan;

- Providing oversight and direction to DEDJTR staff involved in the establishment and delivery of emergency animal welfare services at the regional and incident levels;

- Managing direct reports within the State Emergency Animal Welfare Unit; and

- Actively identifying and seeking solutions to operational and policy issues relevant to emergency animal welfare.

9.3 DELWP Wildlife Welfare Arrangements

The State Agency Commander (SAC) is in place at all times. The SAC will be supported by the Principal Officer Wildlife Emergencies and regionally by the Regional Agency Commanders (RAC) who are the initial point of contact to address wildlife welfare needs in the event of an emergency.

Where an emergency has the potential to impact wildlife welfare the RAC will liaise with the Incident Controller and local government MEMO as a member of the EMT established for the incident to establish a COP with respect to wildlife welfare. The POWE will also be consulted.

The POWE is responsible for:
- Actively monitoring the potential risks to wildlife welfare as a consequence of current and predicted conditions including weather and the status of existing emergency incidents across the state;

- Liaising with relevant animal welfare agencies and organisations including DEDJTR, AVA, RSPCA, MAV and local government to enable effective and timely preparedness and delivery of wildlife welfare services during an emergency;

- Overseeing the maintenance of the COP with respect to wildlife welfare.

- Ensuring DELWP's emergency wildlife welfare operations are properly resourced, with appropriate management structures in place at the state, regional and incident levels;

- Ensuring that the welfare of wildlife is appropriately considered during emergency response and relief operations, in accordance with the Plan;

- Providing oversight and direction to DELWP staff involved in the establishment and delivery of emergency wildlife welfare support services at the regional and incident levels;

- Managing direct reports within the State Emergency Wildlife Response Unit; and actively identifying and seeking solutions to operational and policy issues relevant to emergency wildlife

9.4 Impact Assessments

Initial and secondary impact assessments are discussed in detail in the MEMP.

The control agency will coordinate the initial impact assessment and share with Council and relevant agencies as required.

Council will take a key role in secondary impact assessments and should work closely with Ag Vic on data collection.

The AWC will coordinate field staff and advise the information to be gathered which will be entered into the recovery module in Crisisworks.

9.5 Processes for requesting supplementary resources

When supplementary resources (personnel, equipment or services) are needed to respond to animal welfare, the principles for accessing resources defined in the *State Emergency Response Plan* will be followed. Principles are based on an agency or organisation first exhausting all resources owned or directly within their control (i.e. through a pre-existing arrangement) prior to requesting assistance from elsewhere.

Informal partnerships have been developed between the municipality and other resource providers for the purpose of supporting the Mansfield Shire Council in emergency planning, preparation, response and recovery functions and activities. Refer the MEMP. Where resources are not available when required, the situation will be escalated to regional and state levels to ensure needs are met.

9.6 Information Collection and Sharing

Referral of specific animal welfare needs, including those identified through control agency initial impact assessment, may require disclosure of personal information to other agencies or organisations involved in the provision of these services.

To ensure information sharing is consistent with the *Information Privacy Act, 2000* the following principles apply:

- Wherever possible, when collecting information from affected persons for use by other agencies or organisations, the collecting party will disclose the purpose of collection to the affected person;

- Personal information will only be disclosed to other agencies or organisations involved in the management of the emergency or for the provision of relief and recovery services; and

- Agencies and organisations are required to use and share information for the original purposes for which it was obtained only, unless the collecting agency or organisation believes the use or disclosure is necessary for law enforcement purposes (Schedule 1 of the *Information Privacy Act*; The information privacy principles).

10. Animal welfare support services

The State Emergency Animal Welfare Plan defines animal welfare support services as including, but not limited to, the following activities:

- Planning for animals in the event of an emergency;

- Management of displaced animals (including relocated animals);

- Animal welfare assessment, veterinary treatment, humane destruction, salvage slaughter and disposal;

- Provision of emergency pet food, livestock fodder and water; and

- Planning for long term recovery.

10.1 Management of displaced animals (including relocated animals)

Managing relocated animals at Emergency Relief Centres

Ensuring arrangements for managed animals are described in evacuation and relocation procedures will improve animal welfare and human safety outcomes. If animals are not included in relocation processes, some people may choose to remain with the animals and risk their lives.

Alternatively, people may turn up at relief centres with animals regardless of whether or not centres are set up to cater for animals or they may independently relocate with animals to locations which may not be safe.

Under Victoria's emergency management arrangements local government is responsible for the coordination of the provision and operation of Emergency Relief Centres – refer the Standard Operating Procedure for animals at Emergency Relief Centres.

Relief centre arrangements should include provision for the registration, treatment and short-term housing of animals. Where arrangements cannot be made at the site animal owners should be advised of the alternative arrangements that are in place.

Consideration should be given to:
- Animal admission, identification and record keeping;

- Secure and functional housing or holding facilities and their proximity to relief centres;

- Feed and water requirements;

- Access to veterinary treatment for injuries, illness and humane destruction;

- Identification and contacting of owners;

- Animals requiring specialist attention (such as horses and wildlife);

- Animal species and gender separation, including requirements for housing and control of any dog that has been declared dangerous or menacing by council; and

- Staff and community health and safety.

Mansfield Shire Council has entered into non-formal arrangements with the Mansfield Agricultural Society (Mansfield Showgrounds) and the McCormack Park Committee of Management (Merrijig) to use their facilities for temporary accommodation of large animal such as horses and small numbers of sheep, alpacas, goats etc. Refer to the Operating Guidelines for Emergency Relief Centres for protocols.

Non-government animal welfare organisations, including the RSPCA, may have resources to support the management of relocated animals at relief centres and other facilities.

Victoria's standards for animal containment and care are provided for in Codes of Practice, which may not be fully achievable or appropriate in emergency situations. DEDJTR can provide advice on requirements for relocated animals for control and support agencies in emergency situations.

Emergency containment of stray animals

Stray companion animals or livestock may become a hazard and require emergency containment or impoundment. The *Impounding of Livestock Act 1994* and the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* detail the powers and requirements of land owners or occupiers, and agencies in relation to impounding activities as well as conditions under which animals must be kept to ensure welfare needs are met and future welfare problems avoided (e.g. food, water and shelter requirements). Council is the appropriate first contact point for reports of stray animals.

Displaced Wildlife

Where wildlife has been displaced and has been captured or contained by emergency response personnel or members of the public, they should be assessed by an appropriate officer appointed by DELWP. If injured, the assessment will determine the need for treatment and rehabilitation or euthanasia.

Refer to the Contacts Directory for wildlife shelters.

10.2 Animal welfare assessment, veterinary treatment, humane destruction, salvage slaughter and disposal

Every effort should be made to minimise the level of pain and suffering of affected animals with the resources available. Critical to this is the timing of assessment, treatment and humane destruction or salvage slaughter activities.

Animal Welfare Assessment
DEDJTR (animals other than wildlife) and DELWP (wildlife) are responsible for assessing the direct impacts of an emergency on animals. This process entails scoping the incident, its impact and consequences, then defining appropriate objectives, tactics and resources to enable an effective response.

Any officer authorised under the *POCTA Act* is obliged to address animal suffering or report animal welfare needs to relevant agencies regardless of species or land tenure.
In principle however:
- DEDJTR will attend to animal welfare assessments and refer assessments involving wildlife to DELWP;
- DELWP will attend to wildlife welfare assessments and refer assessments involving all other animals to DEDJTR.
If owners or emergency agency personnel become aware of an animal welfare assessment need, contact with DEDJTR (managed animals) or DELWP (wildlife) will assist a prompt response. On-ground assessment activities managed by both

agencies will commence once authorisation to enter impacted areas has been given by the control agency.

DEDJTR assessment teams comprising officers authorised under the *POCTA Act* will undertake on-ground assessment of impacted animals (other than wildlife) to assist animal owners to make decisions about the best course of action for their animals. Local Laws and RSPCA officers may assist DEDJTR operations, particularly with the assessment of companion animals and horses. Animals will be assessed based on the need for treatment, immediate humane destruction or salvage slaughter.

Landholders can undertake their own assessment and destruction of stock and may also seek advice from private veterinarians once they can gain safe access to affected animals.

Consistent with the principle that agencies will offer emergency support to the most vulnerable community members in the first instance, DEDJTR assessment teams will give priority to properties with the largest numbers of impacted animals. These properties will be identified as part of the initial scoping of the incident.

DELWP will lead and manage all rescue, assessment and triage activities for wildlife found affected by an emergency. Wildlife rescue teams deployed by DELWP will determine whether affected wildlife require any intervention or treatment. Wildlife rescue teams may include volunteers who have been suitably trained and equipped.

Treatment
DELWP wildlife rescue teams will arrange for the rescue and transport of injured wildlife to established triage sites for assessment.

When veterinary treatment of managed animals is required, animal owners and carers will normally be advised to seek veterinary advice from a private veterinarian. In an emergency, veterinary services may be limited and the added demand resulting from a major emergency can limit animal owners' access to treatment for their injured animals. In an emergency Council should liaise with DEDJTR, DELWP and AVA to determine private veterinarian practices' capacity to meet animal treatment needs and coordinate the development of agreed processes to bridge identified capacity gaps.

Actions to address capacity gaps may include facilitating additional support for local practices, directing animal owners and carers to veterinary practices with latent capacity and the establishment of triage sites where animals can be assessed and their treatment needs (including euthanasia) determined. Depending on the circumstances, triage sites may include capacity for provision of first aid, but will generally not include facilities for ongoing treatment.

AVA will work with DEDJTR, DELWP and local government to facilitate contact with volunteer veterinarians and veterinary nurses wishing to assist in the provision of animal welfare support services in affected areas. They will also liaise with practices within and adjoining the impacted area to develop options to address unmet animal welfare needs.

The RSPCA may also be able to establish or support treatment activities at triage sites.

Humane destruction or salvage slaughter

It is the responsibility of the person in charge of animals to arrange for the humane destruction or salvage slaughter of emergency affected animals where the animals will continue to suffer if they remain alive, or where the animals have little or no chance of survival.

DEDJTR will assist in the humane destruction or salvage slaughter of managed animals when the person in charge cannot or will not perform the necessary actions to alleviate the suffering of their animals. DEDJTR will liaise with Council and RSPCA to identify opportunities for suitably trained and equipped *POCTA Act* authorised officers from these organisations to assist in these activities.

Wherever possible, destruction activities will take place in consultation with the person in charge of affected animals. In situations where owners cannot be found, power for immediate destruction in their absence is provided for under the *POCTA Act.*

DELWP is responsible for managing the assessment and treatment or euthanasia of wildlife during and following an emergency. This will be undertaken by field crews at the incident or by a veterinarian at the triage centre. While it is prohibited to destroy native wildlife under the *Wildlife Act*, registered veterinary practitioners and appropriately authorised officers may euthanase wildlife in accordance with the *POCTA Act*.

Methods of destruction of animals must be humane. Guidance on acceptable methods is available in the relevant codes or standards for welfare which can be found on the DEDJTR website.

Disposal

Victoria's emergency management arrangements establish municipal councils as responsible for the coordination of clean-up activities in an emergency, including disposal of dead animals.

The timing of animal carcass disposal is critical since any delay not only poses a risk to human health and the environment, but also the morale of emergency personnel and the affected community. It is critical that approved methods of carcass disposal are utilised and procedures are followed to minimise inherent risks of disposal, including biosecurity, environmental contamination or the spread of disease.

A number of on-farm and off-farm options exist for the disposal of animal carcasses resulting from an emergency, including licensed landfills, knackeries and rendering facilities, high temperature incineration and on-farm burial.

These same arrangements establish DEDJTR as the provider of advice regarding the disposal of dead or maimed animals, including location, type and number of animals to be disposed. DEDJTR will liaise with DELWP to establish a consolidated view on carcass disposal needs resulting from the incident. They will report these needs to local government who will liaise with the EPA to identify suitable sites for disposal and ensure that appropriate disposal methods are adopted.

10.3 Provision of emergency pet food, livestock fodder and water

Animals require access to food and clean drinking water. In emergency situations, allocation of feed and water will likely be based on meeting the basic needs to ensure

animal survival. It is the responsibility of the person in charge of animals to plan for and provide feed and water for impacted animals.

Emergencies may impact on water quality or supply leading to the need to supply alternative water sources. Emergencies may also impact pastures and other sources of food usually available to sustain livestock and companion animals. DEDJTR and the VFF have entered into an agreement that provides for an effective fodder distribution service to assist the Victorian farming community meet immediate animal welfare needs during an emergency. The agreement provides arrangements for DEDJTR to support the VFF to establish and maintain local fodder depots and manage donations of fodder, including the transport of fodder to these local depots, where it is jointly established that such a need exists.

To assist in the early identification of the need to activate the agreement DEDJTR will scope the initial phase of an emergency to determine the likely extent of emergency fodder needs prior to conferring with the VFF to determine an appropriate approach to address this need.

DEDJTR will work with owners to assess emergency fodder and water needs of animals, and direct animal owners to fodder depots or distribution centres and water points where they have been established by either the relevant local government council or water authority.

The person in charge of animals will be encouraged to make their own arrangements for the collection of fodder and water. Where this is not possible, DEDJTR will liaise with local government and fodder depots to attempt to facilitate the transport of fodder and water to address urgent animal welfare needs.

Longer term fodder and water supplies are the responsibility of the person in charge of animals. In situations where the minimum needs of animals are unlikely to be met, consideration will need to be given to sale, agistment, slaughter or humane destruction.

Donations of pet food may also be made in large scale emergencies. DEDJTR and the RSPCA will liaise with Council to determine suitable local arrangements for impacted pet owners to access donated pet food.

10.4 Planning longer term recovery

Victoria's emergency management arrangements identify DEDJTR as responsible for policy development, state-wide coordination and operational delivery for the agricultural relief and recovery environment including animal welfare. DEDJTR will deliver this role in partnership with other recovery agencies including local government.

Information collected by DEDJTR and DELWP on animal impacts during the course of an emergency will inform government rehabilitation or recovery projects following significant emergency events.

In the case of livestock, rehabilitation and recovery planning will consider fencing (for safe ongoing containment), feed planning and pasture management, water supplies including dam management and animal health considerations (e.g. flystrike, foot rot).

In the case of wildlife, DELWP will develop rehabilitation and release plans for treated animals.

9. Roles and responsibilities

As a result of an emergency animal welfare is often compromised at a time when the owners and carers of animals are under great stress. While the primary responsibility and duty of care always remains with the person in charge of an animal, emergency animal support services provided by a range of government and non-government agencies and organisations can assist. A brief description of the roles and responsibilities of key agencies and organisations is provided below.

The table below is taken from the State Emergency Animal Welfare Plan.

Australian Veterinary Association

Prevention / Mitigation / Risk reduction	• Maintain a volunteer data base of veterinarians and veterinary nurses. • In consultation with DEDJTR and DELWP prepare & distribute fact sheets & other technical information to veterinarians treating injured animals

Response	• In level 2 and 3 incidents with significant animal welfare impacts, the AVA will activate the AVA Emergency Taskforce to:
	   o Contact AVA members and other relevant stakeholders who may be affected to gather information about the situation.
	   o Inform AVA members and other relevant stakeholders about the emergency response.
	   o Utilise the resources of the AVA Communications Team as appropriate.
	   o Assist DELWP and DEDJTR with the dissemination of relevant information.

Relief	• Facilitate communication between veterinarians and the AVA through activation of the 1300 number, mobile telephone contact and electronic communications. • Facilitate contact with volunteer veterinarians and veterinary nurses to establish opportunities to assist in the provision of animal welfare support services in affected areas. • Assist in the identification of veterinarians and practices within affected regions. • Report urgent animal welfare needs arising from the emergency to DEDJTR and DELWP. • Liaise with DEDJTR, DELWP and veterinarians and practices within and adjoining the impacted area to develop options to address unmet animal welfare needs • Liaise with pharmaceutical companies using their distribution networks to transport essential supplies to existing practices and any triage sites established in response to the emergency. • In consultation with DELWP liaise with Zoos Victoria in the dissemination of information and advice for veterinarians regarding the treatment of wildlife.

Recovery	• Advise the AVA Benevolent Fund of veterinarians in difficult financial circumstances as a result of the emergency.

Country Fire Authority

Prevention / Mitigation / Risk reduction	• Ensure animal welfare arrangements are included in all state, regional and incident plans. • Work with DEDJTR and DELWP in the development and delivery of appropriate animal welfare messages in community education programs.
Response	• When a control agency, ensure approved animal welfare messages are provided to the community and media. • Ensure animal welfare and other rural issues identified through initial impact assessment activities are referred to DEDJTR and DELWP.

Department of Health & Human Services

Prevention / Mitigation / Risk reduction	• Ensure animal welfare arrangements are included in all state, regional and incident plans.
Relief	• Ensure animal welfare requests for assistance are referred in accordance with established protocols. • Liaise with DEDJTR where emergencies impact on human health to identify if there are any associated animal health issues.

Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources

Prevention / Mitigation / Risk reduction	• Represent DEDJTR and the state's animal welfare arrangements on relevant emergency management and animal welfare committees and forums. • In partnership with control agencies, develop and implement community education programs to inform animal owners of their responsibilities during an emergency • Communicate emergency animal welfare arrangements and operational requirements to relevant stakeholders. • Provide advice to agencies, organisations and the community regarding animal welfare management in emergencies and risk management planning. • Develop, maintain and communicate protocols that describe restrictions and standards to be used by all personnel, including animal welfare volunteers, deployed by DEDJTR as part of their animal welfare operations (training

needs, personal protective equipment, communications, fatigue management and other OHS requirements).

- Maintain and regularly review this Plan.

Response	• Provide advice to control and support agencies regarding the impact, or potential impact of an emergency on animal welfare, including biosecurity (disease) risks and management strategies.
	• Liaise with DELWP, local government and relevant animal welfare agencies and organisations to enable effective and timely delivery of animal welfare support services during an emergency.
	• Develop information for the public and media relating to the management of animals impacted by the emergency, for release through the Incident Controller.
Relief	• Liaise with DELWP, local government and animal welfare support agencies and organisations to ensure effective allocation of resources.
	• Maintain the COP with respect to animal welfare.
	• Identify and assess injured and affected animals (other than wildlife).
	• Provide advice on options for treatment, humane destruction or emergency salvage slaughter.
	• Where necessary, assist with humane destruction of injured or affected animals.
	• Advise local government of containment needs of stray or roaming animals and disposal needs of dead or injured animals (e.g. location, number and type of animals).
	• Assess fodder and water needs of impacted animals and advise distribution bodies of needs (quantity, type, location).
	• Inform and coordinate animal welfare organisations, volunteer groups or community groups wanting to contribute.
	• Assess and report losses and damage to agricultural assets and animals, and needs of affected persons and communities to government.
	• Investigate complaints relevant to animal welfare.
	• Liaise with DHHS where emergencies impacting on human health may also have associated animal health issues.
Recovery	• Provide advice to individuals, communities, agencies and government on strategies for the re-establishment of rural enterprises and economic recovery.
	• Provide advice about fencing (for safe ongoing containment), feed planning and pasture management, water supplies including dam management, and animal health considerations, which will vary depending on the incident type (e.g. flystrike, foot rot).

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

General wildlife welfare responsibilities	
Prevention / Mitigation / Risk Reduction Activities	• Represent DELWP and the state's wildlife welfare arrangements on relevant emergency management and animal welfare committees and forums. • Communicate emergency wildlife welfare arrangements and operational requirements to relevant stakeholders. • Provide advice to agencies, organisations and the community regarding wildlife welfare management in emergencies and risk management planning. • Develop, maintain and communicate protocols that describe restrictions and standards to be used by all personnel, including wildlife volunteers, deployed by DELWP as part of their wildlife welfare operations (training needs, personal protective equipment, communications, fatigue management and other OHS requirements). • Develop and deliver training programs to volunteers.
Response Activities	• Provide advice to response agencies regarding the impact of an emergency on wildlife. • Liaise with DEDJTR, local government and relevant animal welfare agencies and organisations to enable effective and timely delivery of wildlife welfare support services during an emergency. • Develop information for the public and media relating to the management of wildlife impacted by the emergency, for release through the Incident Controller.
Relief Activities	• Liaise with DEDJTR, local government and animal welfare support agencies and organisations to ensure effective allocation of resources. • Maintain the COP with respect to wildlife welfare. • Identify and assess injured and affected wildlife. Refer treatment needs to triage points (when established and where relevant). • Establish triage sites • Provide advice on options for treatment and rehabilitation or euthanasia of affected wildlife. • Inform animal welfare organisations, volunteer groups or community groups wanting to contribute. • Investigate complaints relevant to wildlife welfare • Develop a wildlife release strategy and arrange for animals requiring further care to be transferred to approved shelters • Ensure the treatment and care of wildlife is conducted in accordance with relevant legislation and codes of practice (the *Wildlife Act 1975* and wildlife rehabilitation guidelines.

Recovery Activities	• Provide advice on wildlife carcass disposal needs to local government, where required or appropriate. • Provide advice to land management agencies and the community on wildlife rehabilitation. • Manage initiative projects relevant to wildlife rehabilitation on crown land.
Bushfire	
Relief Activities	• Lead a coordinated response for the rescue, treatment and rehabilitation of wildlife affected by fire. • Manage the activities of approved wildlife volunteers.
Marine pollution	
Relief Activities	• Provide a coordinated response to dealing with wildlife impacted by marine pollution, including oil or chemical spills, under the *Wildlife Response Plan for Marine Pollution Emergencies.*
Cetacean Strandings and Entanglements	
Response Activities	• Provide a coordinated response to cetacean strandings, for either living or deceased animals, under the *Victorian Cetacean Emergency Plan*. • Provide a coordinated response to cetacean entanglements under the *Victorian Cetacean Emergency Plan*.
Relief Activities	• Oversee carcass management on the foreshore of crown lands managed directly by DELWP.
Wildlife affected by disease	
Response	• Support Agency for response to wildlife affected by disease.

Emergency Management Victoria

Prevention / Mitigation / Risk reduction	• Ensure animal welfare arrangements are included in all state, regional and incident Plans. • Work with DEDJTR and DELWP in the development and delivery of appropriate animal welfare messages in community education programs. •
Response	• Ensure approved animal welfare messages are provided to the community and media.

- Ensure animal welfare and other rural issues identified through initial impact assessment activities are referred to DEDJTR and DELWP.

Local Government

Prevention / Mitigation / Risk Reduction	• Ensure emergency relief and recovery components of MEMPs detail local emergency animal welfare arrangements and providers for relevant animal welfare services including consideration of the following:
	
	    o DEDJTR (managed animals) and DELWP (wildlife) contacts for animal assessment activities,
	    o carcass transport providers and disposal sites,
	    o options for the housing and management of displaced animals, including those presenting at emergency relief centres,
	    o potential sites for donated fodder distribution,
	    o alternative emergency water sources for animals, and
	    o systems for the management of offers of assistance or donations made to local government.
	
	• Communicate municipal animal welfare contacts and arrangements to relevant stakeholders.
	
	• Reference animal welfare information in publications and websites to assist broader community awareness, education and understanding.

Response	• Liaise with relevant animal welfare agencies and organisations to enable effective and timely delivery of council's animal welfare support services. • Provide input to information for the public and media relating to the management of animals impacted by the emergency and arrangements for relocated animals for release by the Incident Controller.
Relief	• Provide assistance with urgent animal welfare needs, including emergency shelter, catering or fodder and veterinary needs. • Manage donated goods and services offered to the municipality. • Emergency confinement of stray animals within the local government area. • Referral of animal welfare needs to responsible and animal welfare support organisations. • Coordination of clean-up activities, including disposal of dead animals. • Provide a municipal point of contact for other agencies and organisations (e.g. control agencies, DEDJTR, DELWP, RSPCA, AVA and VFF), in relation to animal welfare needs or issues. • Make provisions for animals presenting at emergency relief centres that include provision for the registration, treatment and housing of animals at the relief centre or advise animal owners of alternative arrangements where animals cannot be housed at the site.

| Recovery | • Work with DEDJTR to assist in ongoing animal welfare recovery within the municipality. |
| | • Coordinate recovery services for animal owners and carers. |

Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Victorian Branch)

Prevention / Mitigation / Risk reduction	• Lead the annual review of the RSPCA Emergency Response Plan and associated documents.
Relief	• Assist DEDJTR and DELWP to undertake animal welfare assessment activities in accordance with established emergency management structures.
	• Report animal welfare needs in accordance with established emergency reporting systems and processes.
	• Manage the distribution of donations made to RSPCA to established distribution centres.
	• Provide advice to pet and horse owners on issues relating to animal welfare.
	• Respond, where appropriate, to requests for animal welfare resources, in accordance with the State's emergency resource supplementation process.
Recovery	• Provide advice to pet and horse owners on issues relating to animal welfare.

Victorian Farmers Federation

Prevention / Mitigation / Risk reduction	• Contribute to the development of plans and protocols for the provision of fodder relief to assist the farming community to minimise the effects of emergencies on animals in the care of rural landholders.
	• In consultation with DEDJTR distribute fact sheets & other technical information to primary producers
Response	• Liaise with DEDJTR to determine the scale of fodder distribution requirements.
Relief	• Appoint a State Fodder Coordinator to coordinate fodder donation and distribution across affected areas.
	• Establish local fodder depots to service affected areas based on advice from DEDJTR.
	• Manage donations of fodder including the transport of fodder to local depots.
	• Provide weekly progress reports on fodder distribution operations to DEDJTR.

	• Assist with the dissemination of relevant information to primary producers.
Recovery	• Advise DEDJTR and local government on longer term recovery needs of landholders.
	• Assist with the dissemination of relevant information to primary producers.

Victoria Police

Prevention / Mitigation / Risk reduction	• Ensure animal welfare arrangements are included in all state, regional and incident Plans.
Response	• When a control agency, ensure approved animal welfare messages are provided to the community and media.
	• Ensure arrangements are in place at traffic management points that allow effective and timely delivery of animal welfare support services into impacted areas consistent with agreed guidelines.
	• Ensure animal welfare and other rural issues identified through initial impact assessment activities are referred to DEDJTR and DELWP.

8.12 Victorian State Emergency Service

Prevention / Mitigation / Risk reduction	• Ensure animal welfare arrangements are included in all state, regional and incident Plans.
	• Support DEDJTR and DELWP measures to integrate emergency animal welfare arrangements into municipal level plans.
	• Work with DEDJTR and DELWP in the development and delivery of appropriate animal welfare messages in community education programs.
Response	• When a control agency, ensure approved animal welfare messages are provided to the community and media.
	• Ensure animal welfare and other rural issues identified through initial impact assessment activities are referred to DEDJTR and DELWP

Wildlife Shelters and Carers

Relief and Recovery	• Provide assistance in wildlife rescue, recovery and relief activities under the direction of DELWP and in line with conditions and standards outlined in relevant plans and protocols.
	• Where appropriately authorised, provide treatment and rehabilitation of wildlife affected by emergencies, with the intent to release to the wild once recovered.

Where an emergency has the potential to impact wildlife welfare the RAC will liaise with the Incident Controller and local government MEMO as a member of the EMT established for the incident to establish a COP with respect to wildlife welfare. The POWE will also be consulted.

The POWE is responsible for:

- Actively monitoring the potential risks to wildlife welfare as a consequence of current and predicted conditions including weather and the status of existing emergency incidents across the state;

- Liaising with relevant animal welfare agencies and organisations including DEDJTR, AVA, RSPCA, MAV and local government to enable effective and timely preparedness and delivery of wildlife welfare services during an emergency;

- Overseeing the maintenance of the COP with respect to wildlife welfare.

- Ensuring DELWP's emergency wildlife welfare operations are properly resourced, with appropriate management structures in place at the state, regional and incident levels;

- Ensuring that the welfare of wildlife is appropriately considered during emergency response and relief operations, in accordance with the Plan;

- Providing oversight and direction to DELWP staff involved in the establishment and delivery of emergency wildlife welfare support services at the regional and incident levels;

- Managing direct reports within the State Emergency Wildlife Response Unit; and

- Actively identifying and seeking solutions to operational and policy issues relevant to emergency wildlife welfare.

DEDJTR is the lead agency for livestock, companion animal and wildlife welfare support services in an emergency. DEDJTR will assess and assist rural landholders with livestock needs and co-ordinate other agencies (such as RSPCA, Australian Veterinary Association and wildlife carers) to assess and assist with companion animal and wildlife animal welfare.

The role of DEDJTR is to:

- Provide advice to control and support agencies regarding the impact, or potential impact of an emergency on animal welfare, including biosecurity (disease) risks and management strategies.
- Liaise with DELWP, local government and relevant animal welfare agencies and organisations to enable effective and timely delivery of animal welfare support services during an emergency.
- Develop information for the public and media relating to the management of animals impacted by the emergency, for release through the Incident Controller.
- Liaise with DELWP, local government and animal welfare support agencies and organisations to ensure effective allocation of resources.
- Maintain the COP with respect to animal welfare.
- Identify and assess injured and affected animals (other than wildlife).
- Provide advice on options for treatment, humane destruction or emergency salvage slaughter.

- Where necessary, assist with humane destruction of injured or affected animals.
- Advise local government of containment needs of stray or roaming animals and disposal needs of dead or injured animals (e.g. location, number and type of animals).
- Assess fodder and water needs of impacted animals and advise distribution bodies of needs (quantity, type, location).
- Inform and coordinate animal welfare organisations, volunteer groups or community groups wanting to contribute.
- Assess and report losses and damage to agricultural assets and animals, and needs of affected persons and communities to government.
- Investigate complaints relevant to animal welfare.
- Liaise with DHHS where emergencies impacting on human health may also have associated animal health issues.
- Provide advice to individuals, communities, agencies and government on strategies for the re-establishment of rural enterprises and economic recovery.
- Provide advice about fencing (for safe ongoing containment), feed planning and pasture management, water supplies including dam management, and animal health considerations, which will vary depending on the incident type (e.g. flystrike, foot rot).

7.7   RSPCA

RSPCA is responsible for prevention of cruelty to animals by actively promoting their care and protection.

The role of RSPCA in an emergency is to:
- Assist DEDJTR and DELWP to undertake animal welfare assessment activities in accordance with established emergency management structures.
- Report animal welfare needs in accordance with established emergency reporting systems and processes.
- Manage the distribution of donations made to RSPCA to established distribution centres.
- Provide advice to pet and horse owners on issues relating to animal welfare.
    - Respond, where appropriate, to requests for animal welfare resources, in accordance with the State's emergency resource supplementation process.
    - Provide advice to pet and horse owners on issues relating to animal welfare.

7.8   Veterinarians

Veterinarians have the capacity to treat some animals in the field, clinic or triage centres. The role for veterinarians by agreement is:

- Provide service as required by animal owners
- Provide service as advised by assessment teams ie RSPCA and DEDJTR
- Assist in post-impact assessment of animal and stock welfare
- Provide advice to agencies
- Liaise with DEDJTR and/or the Australian Veterinary Association as to their requirements or offers to assist

The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) will deploy its Emergency Taskforce for level 2 or 3 incidents. The AVA will facilitate volunteer "Triage Veterinarians", and will

support local veterinarians and practices to care for animals affected by the emergency.

A detailed list of agency and organisation roles and responsibilities can be found in Section 8 of the **Victorian Emergency Animal Welfare Plan**.

DEDJTR Animal Health Staff

Immediately after the incident, DEDJTR Animal Health staff will conduct rapid impact assessments to capture the nature and scale of the animal welfare needs of livestock, companion animals and wildlife. They will enter the impacted area as soon as the Incident Controller has declared the area safe to do so.

DEDJTR Animal Health staff, being Regional Animal Welfare Coordinators and Animal Health Officers, will perform livestock animal welfare assessments and perform euthanasia as required. They can also assist with facilitating emergency transport and salvage slaughter of affected livestock.

Animal Welfare Co-ordinator

The Development Services Manager or their delegate co-ordinates the Municipal animal welfare response as per this Plan including directing Municipal staff and physical resources, under direction from the MEMO, and;

Facilitate information sharing of rate-payers details to other emergency services to enable an efficient and comprehensive assessment of animal welfare needs following an emergency, in line with section 8.5 of this Plan and the *Information Privacy Act, 2000.*

Maintain up-to-date contact and resource lists for this Plan (Appendices A & B) which are revised every 12 months.

A Council owned plant and equipment list will be maintained and accessible on Crisisworks

It is the responsibility of the Animal Welfare Coordinator to;
- determine the priorities of the Local Laws resources in an emergency
- deploy Local Laws officers/rangers, support agencies and other officers to conduct field assessments, manage and control animal and stock welfare incidents and/or risks, in accordance with briefings and relevant SOPs
- remain in communication with the MEMO and attend any briefings.
- liaise with the DEDJTR Animal Welfare Liaison Officer
- advise the MEMO of any staff deployed to the field
- remain in contact with deployed officers, manage tasks, communicate new information, monitor resources and monitor officers' wellbeing
- communicate with officers and agencies who have been placed on alert and/or standby, to keep them informed of the current situation, manage rosters, stand-down of officers and activation of others, as required
- purchase additional supplies (as required) for the emergency. This will be done in accordance with procedures established by the MEMO, including the keeping of financial records
- arrange for additional human resources (including requesting resources from support agencies) and further escalation of emergency arrangements, if required

- facilitate communication of appropriate information to the public
- constantly assess available information on the situation, to ensure that response to the emergency and/or recovery activity is appropriate
- where the resources required to satisfactorily complete a task are beyond the municipality's capacity, the Animal Welfare Coordinator will seek additional resources, in accordance with established arrangements or agreements as early as possible. The Coordinator will liaise with the MEMO and the MRM regarding the need for additional resources.
- develop, review and approve SOPs
- provision for work practice notes

Animal Welfare Team

Formation of an Animal Welfare Team (a combination of appropriate Agency personnel, Local Laws Officers, administrative support staff and/or skilled animal handlers, led by the Animal Welfare Coordinator) may be considered to deal with the animal welfare component of the emergency.

7.10 Risk Management / Occupational Health & Safety

As per the Councils risk management policy and procedures, officers will be required to further identify and assess any perceived or actual risks as required.

Some foreseeable risks are listed below;
- Diseases from dead animals
- Injured or wild animals that need to be impounded
- Working in extreme weather conditions
- Working with inadequate facilities (e.g. burnt stockyards, temporary fencing, etc)
- Working in Isolation
- Emotional impact of dealing with injured, burnt or dead animals and their owners

A variety of processes and controls to manage risk associated with personal safety must be implemented based on the risk management process. As an example, where appropriate, personnel may need expertise in handling animals or operating plant and equipment, immunisation against tetanus, communications systems if working in isolation.

Specific Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) appropriate to the risk will generally be advised or provided by the relevant agency and used when necessary excludes general safety equipment such as boots.

Councils OHS policy and procedures must be followed at all times. Every person, whether acting on behalf of an agency or on their own behalf, is responsible for their own safety.

7.11 External agencies

- DELWP / Parks Vic (stock and native animals)
- RSPCA and other animal welfare agencies
- Victoria Police

- Local Veterinarians
- Australian Veterinary Association

7.12   Resource & Contact Directory

The municipality will maintain lists of personnel, equipment and services in preparation emergency management activities including animal welfare. These lists will be updated annually.

8.   Communication Management

8.1   Briefings

Briefings should take place as soon as possible, once the most immediate facts are available. Initially, only limited information may be available, but ongoing briefings will take place during the emergency.

Animal and stock welfare briefings will include:
- a situation report, including the nature of the emergency, its location and severity
- emergency management arrangements, including which agency is the control agency for the emergency and which support agencies are known to be deployed
- the nature and extent of animal and stock welfare risks
- how the animal and stock welfare risks are to be managed
- details of any resource providers on alert, to provide support if required
- operational roles and responsibilities of the officers, including:
  - key tasks to be performed by each officer
  - SOPs to apply
  - task locations
  - key timings
  - resources and supplies to be utilised, including personal protective equipment
  - arrangements to ensure the officers remain in contact

Once briefed, the Animal Welfare Coordinator will gather information to enable an initial assessment of animal and stock welfare risks

8.2   Debriefings

The purpose of an emergency operational debrief is to highlight effective actions and any issues that arose during the emergency.

Officers in the field will be debriefed at the end of each shift by the Animal Welfare Coordinator or delegate to ensure that all pertinent information is collected and to monitor staff welfare.

At the conclusion of an emergency event, the Animal Welfare Coordinator will debrief all Local Laws/Ranger staff involved in the emergency.

The Animal Welfare Coordinator should then attend and contribute to a multi-agency debrief.

8.3   Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre (MECC)

There is no longer the requirement for a municipality to open and operate a MECC.

8.4   Liaison

The Animal Welfare Coordinator or delegate will liaise with internal and external emergency management personnel including the MEMO, MRM, RAWC, other agencies and resource suppliers throughout the emergency to:

- gain information required to assess and manage animal and stock welfare risks
- impart information required by emergency management personnel and external agencies
- keep relevant personnel up-to-date with animal and stock welfare issues
- request support

8.5   Information management

During an emergency, tasks and activities must be accurately documented to ensure that all animal and stock welfare emergency issues and tasks are identified and attended to appropriately.

Records of animal welfare needs, ie. requests for service and action taken will be recorded on Crisisworks (and also the Local Laws database.) Crisisworks allows multi agency access to information at the (Municipal) Incident Control Centre, or remotely via login to https://mansfield.crisisworks.com A Username and Password is required and available through the MEMO.

All reports received of animals requiring services will immediately be passed onto the Animal Welfare Coordinator or relevant external agency through Crisisworks.

Any information, either received or provided to external agencies, will be treated in accordance with the Information Privacy Act 2000. These records will assist in the evaluation and review of the Plan.

9.   Disseminating information and warnings

Warnings should be used under specific circumstances where community action is necessary to protect lives, property or the environment. Warnings will be issued by the Control Agency and Council will play a part in disseminating the warnings. Any media and communications to the public will be in accordance with the Municipal Emergency Management Plan Pt 3.10 Public Information and Warnings.

The Animal Welfare Coordinator will liaise with the MRM and/or the control agency (eg DEDJTR Animal Welfare Liaison Officer) and may assist the development and distribution of public warnings regarding the animal welfare of companion animals, livestock and wildlife.

Contact details for further information should be supplied with any distributed public information.

Various public information formats may be useful for distributing approved information and advice to the community, including printed information handouts, community meetings and radio or television interviews.

Consideration must be given for culturally and linguistically diverse populations, and other isolated and vulnerable communities.

9.1   Public Information Resources

The Mansfield Emergency Animal Welfare Plan is available to the public via Council's website www.mansfield.vic.gov.au

Public information resources can help to address the range of identified animal welfare risks.

While generic public information will be available from control agencies, basic specific local information has been developed in consultation with control agencies.

These public information resources are listed in Appendix A.

10   Emergency Animal Welfare Services

10.1   Emergency Relief Centres

Potential Emergency Relief Centres have been identified at various locations throughout the Shire and are detailed in Mansfield MEMP and its' sub-plan; Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan.

Selection of an Emergency Relief Centre will depend on the location, size and type of emergency and the facilities available at or near the site. The MRM in consultation with the Animal Welfare Coordinator and the MEMO will nominate and activate appropriate Relief Centre(s)

Mansfield Agricultural and Pastoral Society have confirmed they are able to accommodate a number of horses and the Society is really keen to help our community in times of need. The A&P Society will open the Showgrounds for anyone whose emergency plans fail and are not able to find a safe, alternative location to take their horses. The A&P Society will also open the grounds on Extreme and Code Red days for people to go if their plan is to leave early.

Refer Appendix C for Relief Centre listing.

10.2   Identification of Affected Animals

In an emergency event, information regarding affected animals will be recorded on a register (see Appendix E – Relief Centre Animal Registration Form). This will allow the tracking of affected animals and the effort to address animal welfare issues.

Local government (domestic animals) and DEDJTR (livestock) can assist in the identification of affected animals that are registered, microchipped or identified through the National Livestock Identification System (see livestock below).

Dogs and cats

Information regarding dogs and cats will be recorded at relief centres. Microchip numbers and Council registration numbers will be recorded as part of this process.

Victorian law requires that dogs and cats are registered with their local council and are microchipped to ensure they are permanently identified. Registering or microchipping assists in domestic animal identification in situations where they stray or are evacuated as a result of an emergency and require reuniting with their owner.

Horses

While it is advised that horses are identified using a microchip, this is not a legal requirement. However, owners are strongly encouraged to have horses' microchipped and registered on a licensed animal registry.

In an emergency, horse owners are also being advised to write a contact number on the side of the animal or on its hooves using permanent texta so they can be identified if they are outside of the property.

Livestock

The National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) is Australia's system for identifying and tracking beef and dairy cattle, sheep and goats from their property of birth to slaughter. Livestock owners involved in the sale of animals are required to identify animals under this scheme, which can be used in an emergency event to assist in the identification of evacuated or stray animals.

Native Animals

There is no recognised system for identification of individual native animals. Where possible, the Animal Welfare Coordinator will work with DEDJTR in the management of affected native wildlife.

Appendix A includes contacts for local Native Animal Rescue services.

10.3   Management of Displaced Animals

Animals presenting at Emergency Relief Centres

This Plan has made efforts to have animal relief facilities located throughout the Shire that may house a variety of affected animals for short term periods.

People transporting animals to an Emergency Relief Centre may be directed to a nominated area or animal relief facility. Owners may be requested to keep their animals contained at one of the identified facilities, or to find suitable agistment themselves.

Non-government animal welfare organisations, including the RSPCA, may have resources to support evacuated animals at relief and other centres.

The Community Animal Relief Directory is a nation-wide support network and has an on-line list of private facilities willing to provide agistment or care for displaced horses and other animals as well as fodder, transport etc. Further information can be found on their website
http://www.thebushfirefoundation.org/animaldisasterrelief/community-releif-stations/

Other sites for management of displaced animals are listed in Appendix A.

Emergency Containment of Displaced/Unconfined Animals

Unconfined animals (domestic or stock) can pose a danger to the public and should be restrained as soon as possible. The *Impounding of Livestock Act 1994* and the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* detail the powers and requirements of land owners or occupiers and agencies in relation to impounding activities as well as conditions under which animals must be kept to ensure welfare needs are met and future welfare problems avoided (eg. food, water and shelter requirements). Agencies involved in impounding animals may vary depending on the type and location of the animal. If uncontained animals are detected, Mansfield Shire Council should be contacted immediately (5775 8555).

10.4   Animal Welfare Needs Assessment

DEDJTR is the lead agency for animal welfare in emergencies. DEDJTR staff will assess the needs of livestock and wildlife and co-ordinate the appropriate support agencies to assist with the needs of animal welfare assessments. Support agencies may include the RSPCA, private veterinarians, the Australian Veterinary Association, Parks Victoria and registered wildlife groups.

Livestock and domestic animal welfare assessment needs on private property will be reported to DEDJTR for actioning. In smaller scale incidents, reports can be sent to the DEDJTR Animal Welfare Officer. DEDJTR will liaise with council officers, the RSPCA and other support agencies to ensure a coordinated and appropriate response.

10.5   Veterinary Treatment

In most instances the treatment of animals will ideally be organised by owners in conjunction with their private veterinarian. However, in a large scale event, local veterinary practices may be overwhelmed or inaccessible.

When veterinary treatment of animals is required, animal owners and carers will normally be advised by assessment teams to seek veterinary advice from a private veterinarian. In large scale emergencies, when private veterinarians may be operating beyond capacity, additional triage sites may be established to treat (or euthanize if necessary) animals impacted by the emergency.

Additional support may be required, including animal triage sites, treatment facilities, voluntary veterinarians and vet nurses or veterinary supplies. These will be co-ordinated by DEDJTR, and facilitated by the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA). Other assistance may be sourced from the RSPCA, private Veterinary Clinics, etc.

The need for additional triage sites may be identified by local government, DEDJTR or local veterinary practitioners.

When triage sites have been established animal welfare assessment teams managed by DEDJTR will make owners and carers aware of these sites.

DELWP managed Wildlife Rescue Teams will arrange for the rescue and transport of injured wildlife to local vet clinics, authorised wildlife rehabilitators, or established triage sites for treatment, depending on the scale of the emergency.

Humane destruction or salvage slaughter

It is the responsibility of the person in charge of the animal to arrange for the humane destruction or salvage slaughter of emergency affected animals where the animals will continue to suffer if they remain alive, or where the animals have little or no chance of survival. DEDJTR can assist in the humane destruction or salvage slaughter of animals when the person in charge cannot (or will not) perform the necessary actions to alleviate the suffering of their animals. Destruction of animals is restricted to the owner, Vic Police, DEDJTR, DELWP, the owner and authorised officers under Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (POCTA).

Other POCTA authorised Officers, with the appropriate training and equipment (eg. from the RSPCA or some local governments) may also assist. Wherever possible, destruction activities will take place in consultation with the person in charge of affected animals. In situations where owners cannot be found, indemnity for immediate destruction in their absence is provided by Section 21(ii) of POCTA.

Methods of destruction of animals must be consistent with the relevant Code of Practice, such as the *Codes of Accepted Farming Practice for the Welfare of Animals* (species specific in the case of livestock), *Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses*, and *Code of Practice for the Welfare of Wildlife During Rehabilitation.*

Disposal

The timing of animal carcass disposal is critical since any delay not only poses a risk to human health and the environment, but also the morale of emergency personnel and the affected owner / community. It is critical that approved methods of carcass disposal are utilised and procedures are followed to minimise inherent risks of disposal, including biosecurity, environmental contamination or the spread of disease.

A number of on-farm and off-farm options exist for the disposal of animal carcasses resulting from an emergency, including licensed landfills, knackeries and rendering facilities, and high temperature incineration. Disposal on private land and government owned sites such as unlicensed or decommissioned landfill sites may be allowed subject to section 30A *(Environment Protection Act)* approval from the EPA and will require the development of a site management plan. Vic Roads may assist with the disposal of carcasses on Vic Roads managed roads.

Under the EMMV the local municipal council is responsible for the coordination of clean-up activities in an emergency, including disposal of dead animals (livestock and wildlife). The EMMV lists DEDJTR as the provider of advice regarding the disposal of dead or maimed animals, including location, type and number of animals to be disposed. The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is listed in the EMMV to ensure that appropriate disposal methods are adopted for wastes resulting from response activities.

The DEDJTR Animal Welfare EMLOwill liaise with Council regarding the carcass disposal needs of livestock and domestic animals, and with the assistance of the EPA, can assist Council to identify suitable sites for disposal.

10.6   Provision of Emergency Pet Food, Livestock Fodder and Water

In emergency situations, allocation of feed and water will likely be based on meeting the basic needs to ensure survival. It is the responsibility of the person in charge of the animal (see section 7.2) to plan for and provide feed and water for impacted animals. However some people may need a great deal of assistance in some cases to be able to make decisions about their animals, due to their personal trauma over the incident. Through the MRM in conjunction with DEDJTR, Council may need to assist with longer term care or agistment arrangements.

In large scale emergencies, pet food and fodder may be donated, leading to the establishment of distribution points.

The contact directory in Appendix A provides a list of local feed suppliers.

Animals require access to clean drinking water. Emergencies may impact on water quality or supply leading to the need to supply alternative water sources.

Drought relief bores have been installed and maintained by Council to provide water for stock when required. These water sources will be available for animal welfare during activation of this Plan. Refer Appendix C.

Longer term fodder and water supplies are the responsibility of the person in charge of the animal however DEDJTR may coordinate and distribute long term fodder supply.

In situations where the minimum needs of animals are unlikely to be met, consideration will need to be given to sale, agistment, slaughter or humane destruction of animals.

Where the delivery of basic services for animals is not possible in an emergency, the Animal Welfare Team will communicate with DEDJTR who will report any transport assistance needs to the MEMO where assistance may be arranged.

10.7   Coordination of Donations and Offers of Assistance

Material animal aid including fodder and pet food

Donations of material animal aid in addition to pet food, fodder and veterinary supplies may also be made in large scale emergencies. The Animal Welfare Team or personnel on site at a relief centre will refer offers and donations of fodder, pet food and other material aid to established distribution points. The DEDJTR Animal Welfare EMLOcan assist with the co-ordination of donated food, fodder and supplies.

The RSPCA will also take a leading role in coordinating cash and material donations.

Offers of food or assistance should be recorded on Crisisworks.

Volunteers

Volunteer groups with an interest in livestock and domestic animal welfare can pre-register their services with DEDJTR's Bureau of Animal Welfare. Wildlife volunteers are generally organised via the existing network of wildlife foster carers and shelter operators that are known to DEDJTR. Volunteer veterinarians and veterinary nurses can register interest through the AVA.

DEDJTR and the Mansfield Shire Council may proactively contact the Manager of Spontaneous Volunteers (MSEV) program (refer to the MEMP for details) or individual volunteer groups based on advice from an Incident Controller, or requests for assistance.

Delivery of animal services by volunteers may include support of triage sites, management of animals at emergency relief centres, and the distribution of fodder to areas declared safe to enter. Volunteers will not be used for livestock and domestic animal welfare assessment activities due to safety and authorisation requirements under POCTA.

Volunteers are required to work within established emergency management structures to ensure personal safety, prevent duplication and ensure the efficient and effective use of resources. For these reasons, volunteers will be required to abide by established volunteer management processes which may include pre-requisite training and accreditation needs, registration, communication and reporting procedures, personal protective equipment needs and other safety measures.

10.8   Long Term Recovery Needs

Information collected on animal impacts during significant emergency events will be forwarded to DEDJTR to inform government rehabilitation or recovery projects.

In the case of livestock, consideration should be given to fencing (for safe ongoing containment), feed planning and pasture management, water supplies including dam management, and animal health considerations, which will vary depending on the incident type (eg. flystrike, foot rot).

In the case of wildlife, rehabilitation plans for high significance flora and fauna may be developed.

Representatives from the agricultural and animal husbandry industries and environmental agencies should be invited to take part in recovery planning though taking a seat on recovery committees.

11 Distribution List

The Mansfield MAEWP will be distributed to the following emergency management personnel or positions:
- Municipal Emergency Manager (MEM)
- Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO)
- Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM)
- Municipal Fire Prevention Officer (MFPO)
- MEMPC

- Animal Welfare Coordinator – Municipal
- Mansfield Shire Council Local Laws officers
- DEDJTR Animal Health, Benalla district office
- Other internal or external personnel, where appropriate.

The MAEWP is also available on Crisisworks and the Mansfield Shire Council website.

12 Appendices

Appendix A – Definitions
Appendix B – Acronyms
Appendix C – Standard Operating Procedures
Appendix D - Contact Database
Appendix E - Equipment Checklist & Suppliers
Appendix F - Mansfield Shire Council Water and Resources
Appendix G - DEDJTR - Disposing of carcasses after bushfire, flood or drought
Appendix H - Relief Centre Animal Register template

Appendix A   Definitions (taken from State Animal Emergency Welfare Plan)

Agency	A Government agency, including Commonwealth, State or local government authority.
Animal	Refer to the definition in Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 which basically includes any live member of a vertebrate species (other than human) and some crustaceans.
Animal welfare	How an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives. An animal is in a good state of welfare if (as indicated by scientific evidence) it is healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, able to express innate behaviour, and if it is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear, and distress. Good animal welfare requires disease prevention and veterinary treatment, appropriate shelter, management, nutrition, humane handling and humane slaughter/killing. Animal welfare refers to the state of the animal; the treatment that an animal receives is covered by other terms such as animal care, animal husbandry, and humane treatment.
Animal Welfare Commander	A role established by DEDJTR to lead the agency's emergency animal welfare support services at the state, regional or incident level.
Biosecurity	The protection of the economy, the environment, social amenity or human health from negative impacts associated with the entry, establishment or spread of animal or plant pests and disease, or invasive plant and animal species.
Command	The direction of personnel and resources of an agency in the performance of that organisation's role and tasks. Authority to command is established in legislation or by agreement within an agency
Common Operating Picture	The shared and consistent understanding of the incident held by the IMT and other stakeholders
Companion Animal	Any non-human vertebrate animal kept for the purpose of companionship, recreation, protection or work.
Control	The overall direction of response activities in an emergency. Authority for control is established in legislation or in an emergency response plan, and carries with it the responsibility for tasking other agencies in accordance with the needs of the situation. Control relates to situations and operates horizontally across agencies.
Control agency	The agency responsible for leading the response to a particular type of emergency
Coordination	The bringing together of agencies and resources to ensure effective response to and recovery from emergencies. The main functions of co-ordination are to:

- Ensure effective control has been established and maintained;
- Ensure effective information sharing; and
- Systematic acquisition and allocation of resources in accordance with the requirements imposed by emergencies.

Domestic Animal Businesses	Licenced premises under the Domestic Animals Act 1994 including pet shops, dog/cat breeding and boarding establishments and dog training establishments.
Emergency	An emergency due to the actual or imminent occurrence of an event which in any way endangers or threatens to endanger the safety or health of any person in Victoria or which destroys or damages, or threatens to destroy or damage, any property in Victoria, or endangers or threatens to endanger the environment or an element of the environment in Victoria
Emergency Management Team	A team which assists a controller in formulating a response strategy and in its execution by all agencies, and which assists the Emergency Response Coordinator in determining resource acquisition needs and in ensuring coordinated response to an emergency.
Emergency Relief	The provision of life support and essential needs to persons affected by an emergency
Emergency Relief Centre	A building or place established to provide life support and essential needs to persons affected by an emergency (including evacuees). Emergency relief centres are established on a temporary basis to cope with the immediate needs of those affected during the initial response to the emergency. They do not imply any longer-term use of facilities as a location for recovery services
Emergency Response Coordinator	A person appointed as state, regional, municipal or incident emergency response co-ordinator, whose role is to co-ordinate the response to an emergency.
Evacuation	The planned relocation of persons from dangerous or potentially dangerous areas to safer areas and eventual return.
Fodder	Feed for livestock such as hay, or pre-prepared feedstuffs designed specifically for livestock.
Livestock	Any animal kept for the purposes of primary production, including cattle, sheep, pigs, poultry, ratites, buffalo, camels, alpacas, goats and deer; or horses, including where used for recreation.
Managed animal	Any animal, including wildife and exotics, that is owned or possessed or is under a person's care, control or supervision.
Organisation	Any non-government or not for profit entity, company or authority.

Person in Charge of animals	A person who is the owner or has the animal in their possession or custody, or under the person's care, control or supervision and any employee or agent of the owner of the animal.
Principal Officer Wildlife Emergencies	A role established by DELWP to lead the agency's emergency wildlife welfare support services at state level and support response activities at a regional or incident level.
Recovery	The assisting of persons and communities affected by emergencies to achieve a proper and effective level of functioning
Salvage slaughter	The processing of animals through an abattoir. Livestock impacted by an emergency, suitable for salvage slaughter are those that do not show signs of distress or disablement and are fit enough to be transported.
State Agency Commander	A role established within DELWP to coordinate its emergency response arrangements across the organisation at a State level.
State Emergency Animal Welfare Unit	A unit established by DEDJTR to assist in the statewide coordination of animal welfare services and resources. The unit will operate within a DEDJTR state level incident management structure (when in place) or that of a control agency.
Support agency	An agency which provides services, personnel, or material to support or assist a control agency or affected persons.
Triage	The process of determining the priority of veterinary treatment based on the severity of an animal's condition. This rations veterinary treatment efficiently when resources are insufficient for all animals to be treated immediately.
Triage Site	A site where animals are assessed and their treatment needs (including euthanasia) are determined. Sites may include capacity for provision of first aid, but will not include facilities for ongoing treatment.
Victorian Emergency Animal Welfare Committee	A consultative forum chaired by DEDJTR that provides ongoing leadership and oversight in the development and review of plans and policies relating to emergency animal welfare management in Victoria.
Wildlife	Any vertebrate animal indigenous to Australia, some non-indigenous vertebrates (deer and game birds declared to be wildlife under the *Wildlife Act, 1975*), any terrestrial invertebrates listed as threatened under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act, 1988,* and does not include fish within the meaning of the *Fisheries Act, 1995*.

Appendix B Acronyms

AVA	Australian Veterinary Association (Victorian Division)
CFA	Country Fire Authority
DHHS	Department of Health & Human Services
DELWP	Department of Environment Land, Water and Planning
DEDJTR	Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources
EMLO	Emergency Management Liaison Officer
EMT	Emergency Management Team
EMV	Emergency Management Victoria
EMMV	Emergency Management Manual of Victoria
IC	Incident Controller
ICC	Incident Control Centre
IMT	Incident Management Team
IMS	Incident Management System
LLO	Local Laws Officer
MAV	Municipal Association of Victoria
MEM	Municipal Emergency Manager
MECC	Municipal Emergency Co-ordination Centre
MERC	Municipal Emergency Response Co-ordinator
MEMO	Municipal Emergency Resource Officer
MRM	Municipal Recovery Manager
POCTA	*Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act*, 1986
PV	Parks Victoria
RAC	Regional Agency Commanders - Added July 2017 KM
RAWC	Regional Animal Welfare Commander
RSPCA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
SAWC	State Animal Welfare Commander
SCC	State Control Centre
SES	State Emergency Service
VicPol	Victoria Police
VFF	Victorian Farmers Federation

Appendix C Standard Operating Procedures

Ongoing development of SOPs will take place to ensure that all identified animal and stock welfare risks are appropriately addressed.

The Animal Welfare Coordinator - in consultation with the MEMO and DEDJTR as the lead agency for animal welfare in emergencies - will be responsible for the:
- development, review and approval of SOPs
- provision for work guidelines/practice notes

SOP 1- Animal Welfare at Relief Centres

Purpose
This procedure outlines the process for the Animal Welfare Team of Mansfield Shire Council to manage the welfare of animals at Emergency Relief Centres.

Scope
This SOP is applicable to the activation of the Mansfield Emergency Animal Welfare Plan. It applies to all Mansfield Shire Council staff or agents involved with animal welfare matters.

Roles and Responsibilities

Municipal Recovery Manager
The MRM is responsible for:

- Ensuring that a review of all designated Emergency Relief Centres is undertaken annually
- In conjunction with the MEMO and MERC, ensure the appropriate activation of the Animal Welfare Team once the need is determined.
- In conjunction with AWC, DEDJTR Animal Welfare EMLO and MEMO, determine the location of the Relief Centre/Centres to be activated.
- Implementing this procedure in the area of their responsibility.

Animal Welfare Coordinator (**AWC**)
The AWC is responsible for:

- Liaising annually with the MRM to review the list of designated relief centres in regard to animal welfare capabilities
- Making recommendations to the MRM and MEMO regarding any improvement required to an Emergency Relief Centre
- Making inspections of Emergency Relief Centres prior to the commencement of the fire season
- Ensure all equipment held by the Animal Welfare Team for the welfare of animals is maintained and available
- Maintaining a contact list and equipment available from pet shops, veterinarians and animal welfare agencies (refer MAEWP Appendix A)
- Liaise with DEDJTR regarding animal welfare
- In the event of an emergency liaise with the MRM and MEMO regarding the need to deploy Local Laws officers to attend a Relief Centre

- In the event of an emergency ensuring that Local Laws officers have been briefed on the type of incident and the location and all safety issues and the location of the Relief Centre/Centres
- Implement this procedure in the area of their responsibility

Local Laws Officers
Local Laws Officers are responsible for:

- Following the directions of the AWC or delegate
- Assisting the AWC with maintaining equipment and resources
- Maintain their safety own during an emergency
- Implementing this procedure in the area of their responsibility

Procedure
People relocating to Relief Centres may bring their pets and animals with them and this will require adequate facilities to ensure their welfare.

Activation
The AWC will liaise with the MEMO and MRM on becoming aware of an emergency.

Operational activities in this SOP will be initiated by the AWC at the request of, or following consultation with the MEMO and/or MRM

The alert, standby and deployment phases may occur concurrently.

Alert
Once the AWC is notified or alerted to the emergency, he/she will:

- Notify the MEMO or MRM (if required)and DEDJTR Animal Welfare Coordinator
- Assess emergency information
- Alert and brief relevant Local Laws officers (and other officers as appropriate).
- Alert and brief neighbouring municipalities and any partners (if necessary).

Standby
The AWC will:

- Receive and assess information indicating that animal/stock welfare emergency management at Emergency Relief Centres may be required
- Brief relevant Local Law officers and other officers and place them on standby
- Keep officers and stakeholders on alert to keep them informed of the current situation
- Receive and conduct updated briefings with relevant officers

Review resource requirements as situation reports are received. Officers placed on standby may be asked to report to a central location such as a coordination centre, depending on the situation. Officers on standby will prepare themselves and make ready all resources required and be capable of immediate response.

Deployment
The AWC may:

- Deploy Local Law officers and advise DEDJTR Animal Welfare EMLO to conduct field assessments at Relief Centres

- Remain in communication with the MEMO and DEDJTR Animal Welfare EMLO and attend any briefings. The MEMO will be advised of any staff deployed to the field.
- Remain in contact with deployed officers, manage tasks, communicate new information, monitor resources and monitor officers' wellbeing
- Communicate with officers and agencies who have been placed on alert and/or standby, to keep them informed of the current situation
- Manage rosters, stand-down of officers and deployment of others, as required
- Purchase additional supplies (as required) for the emergency. This will be done in accordance with procedures established by the MEMO, including the keeping of financial records.
- Arrange for additional human resources (including requesting resources from support agencies) and further escalation of emergency arrangements, if required
- Facilitate communication of appropriate information to the public

Escalation

Where the resources required to satisfactorily complete a task are beyond the municipality's capacity, the AWC will liaise with the MEMO, MRM and the DEDJTR Animal Welfare EMLO regarding the need for additional resources.

Considerations

- Ensure adequate availability of water and food
- Other safe and secure locations for housing animals (pound, animal welfare organisations, vets, databases)
- Safety of people attending Emergency Relief Centre
- Other animal/stock welfare tasks required to be undertaken

Logging Animals at Relief centre

Animals that arrive at an Emergency Relief Centre with their owner may be logged into the system using the form at Appendix Animals that are stray will be dealt with through usual Local Laws procedures.

Safety

All staff and volunteers who are deployed to attend an Emergency Relief Centre are responsible for their own safety. No task will be performed unless the risks have been assessed and suitable controls implemented.

Special consideration must be given to:

- Injuries animals may inflict on people
- Personal hydration
- Adequate food intake
- Adequate rest
- Report any welfare issues to the MEMO

Review

The Animal Welfare Coordinator will ensure a review of this SOP occurs annually or following an emergency where the MAEWP has been activated.

SOP 2- Removal/Disposal of Dead Animal/Stock

Purpose
This procedure outlines the process the Animal Welfare Team and Operations staff of Mansfield Shire Council for the removal/disposal of dead animals/stock as a result of an emergency.

Scope
This SOP is applicable to the activation of the Mansfield Animal & Stock Emergency Welfare Plan. It applies to all Mansfield Shire Council staff or agents involved with the removal/disposal of dead animals/stock.

Roles and Responsibilities

Municipal Emergency Resource Officer

In the event of an emergency, the MEMO is responsible for ensuring:

- in conjunction with the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator and the Municipal Recovery Manager that an assessment is undertaken to ascertain the extent of loss of stock/animals (this assessment is undertaken by DEDJTR Animal Welfare Liaison Officer

- also in conjunction with the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator and the Municipal Recovery Manager the appropriate activation of the Animal Welfare Team once the need is determined

- the Animal Welfare Coordinator is briefed and liaises with the DEDJTR Animal Welfare EMLO to determine the extent and location of the animal loss and the need to remove/dispose of the dead animals/stock

- adequate resources are available to the Animal Welfare Coordinator to perform their functions in accordance with this SOP

- others implement this procedure in the area of their responsibility

Animal Welfare Coordinator
The AWC is responsible for:

In the event of an emergency liaise with the DEDJTR Animal Welfare Liaison Officer, MRM and MEMO regarding the need to deploy LLO's to assess stock/animal loss

- In the event of an emergency ensuring that LLO's have been briefed on the type of incident and the location and all safety issues

- Maintaining liaison with the Environmental Health Unit regarding dead stock/animal health risks

- Liaise with the DEDJTR Animal Welfare Liaison Officer, Municipal Recovery Manager and Local Laws Officers to review and maintain this SOP

- Maintaining a contact list and equipment available for removal of dead stock/animals (refer MAEWP Appendix A)

- Implement this procedure in the area of their responsibility

Council Operational Staff
Council Operational Staff are responsible for:

- Assisting the Animal Welfare Coordinator with the removal/disposal of dead animals/stock under the direction and guidelines of DEDJTR

- Implementing this procedure in the area of their responsibility

Procedure

Activation
The Animal Welfare Coordinator will liaise with DEDJTR Animal Welfare Liaison Officer, MEMO and MRM on becoming aware of an emergency.

The alert, standby and deployment phases may occur concurrently.

Alert
On notification of dead stock or animals the Animal Welfare Coordinator will:

1. Notify the MEMO

2. Liaise with the DEDJTR Animal Welfare EMLO

- Arrange Council Operations staff to collect/remove/dispose of animals if they are in built up areas. Specialised service providers eg knackeries may be required to carry out this task.

- Record Information on dead animals or stock that require removal/disposal on MECC Central

- Alert and brief neighbouring municipalities and any partners (if necessary).

3. Remain in contact with deployed officers, manage tasks, communicate new information, monitor resources and monitor officers' wellbeing

4. Arrange for additional human resources (including requesting resources from support agencies) and further escalation of emergency arrangements, (if required)

5. Facilitate communication of appropriate information to the public

Escalation
Where the resources required to satisfactorily complete a task are beyond the municipality's capacity, the Animal Welfare Coordinator will liaise with DEDJTR, the MEMO and the MRM regarding the need for additional resources.

Supplies and services will be purchased in accordance with arrangements established by the MEMO, including the keeping of appropriate financial records.

Considerations

- All requests for stock removal should be recorded on MECC Central

- The number and species of animals that are dead and need disposal as notified by the relevant agencies and property owners

- The size and weight of the animals to be disposed

- The optimum time-frame required for disposal

- The quantity of animal and associated waste material to be disposed – i.e. poultry litter, eggs, fodder and fittings

- Consultation with the Environment Protection Authority as to suitable disposal sites

- Location of a potential site/s in relation to affected area i.e. transport requirements

- Availability and location of suitable machinery for disposal

Safety

All staff are responsible for their own safety.

While undertaking the activity of removing and disposing of dead animals, special considerations are:

- Wear suitable personal protective equipment (PPE)

- Work in pairs and have rescue equipment on hand

- Are aware of the Zoonotic disease potential of the animals involved i.e. Avian Influenza, Hendra Virus, Newcastle Disease

- Are vaccinated against influenza, Q Fever and Tetanus where possible

- Ensure caution when around machinery and firearms

- Keep well hydrated and take regular breaks

- Have access to a first aid kit

- Report any welfare issues or incidents to the MEMO and site supervisor

No task will be performed unless the risks have been assessed and suitable controls implemented.

Recommended PPE
- Overalls

- Wet weather jacket and pants

- Work boots/gumboots

- Hardhat/sun hat

- Eye protection

- Hearing protection

- Leather gloves

- Dusk mask/P2 mask/P3 mask with specific filters

- Identifying safety tabard

- Sunscreen

- Specific fire-resistant PPE if working on a fire-ground

Equipment available within Mansfield Shire Operations Department
Refer to Appendix 'B"

Review

The Animal Welfare Coordinator will ensure a review of this SOP annually or following an emergency where the MAEWP has been activated.

DEDJTR Publications, available at www.DEDJTR.vic.gov.au

- Disposing of carcasses in response to bushfire, flood or drought (refer Appendix F)

- Agisting livestock affected by bushfire

- Assessing cattle after bushfire

- Assessing sheep after bushfire

- Emergency stock containment areas

- Floods and animal health

- Help for animals affected by bushfire

- Horses and bushfire

Appendix D - Contact Database

- **Municipal Emergency Animal Welfare Team**
- **Municipal Emergency Management Team**
- **Potential Livestock Holding Areas**
- **Animal Health – DEDJTR**
- **Livestock Transport**
- **Management of displaced animals**
- **Animal welfare assessment**
- **Animal euthanasia**
- **Veterinary treatment/triage**
- **Carcass disposal**
- **Water supplies**
- **Donated fodder supplies**
- **Animal welfare groups**
- **Horse clubs**
- **Neighbouring local government contacts**

Service	Organisation / Business	Contact Name/Role	Phone/email/website	Address
Municipal Emergency Animal Welfare Team				
Animal Welfare Team Coordinator	Mansfield Shire Council		57758591 or 0417742843 michael.bismire@mansfield.vic.gov.au	Private Bag 1000 Mansfield 3722
Animal Welfare Team Leader		Jeni Fleming	jeni.fleming@mansfield.vic.gov.au 5775 8539	
Council	Local Laws Officer	James Brown John Beesley	5775 8555 AH and emergency call out	
Alternate Service Provided	4 site	Mark Morey		P.O Box 1243 Wodonga Victoria 3690
DEDJTR Animal Welfare	DEDJTR Benalla		Benalla Office 5761 1604 Call Centre 136 186	

Service	Organisation / Business	Contact Name/Role	Phone/email/website	Address
Liaison Officer			http://www.DEDJTR.vic.gov.au/	
Municipal Emergency Management Team				
MEMO	Mansfield Shire Council	Kevin Murphy or Dep MEMO	57758555 57758544 0408 576 335	Private Bag 1000 Mansfield 3722
MRM	Mansfield Shire Council	Dena Vlekkert or On-call MRM	0417 239 704 0437 751 502	Private Bag 1000 Mansfield 3722
MERC	Mansfield VicPol	57752555	Refer MEMP Contact Database	
Potential Livestock Holding Areas				
	Mansfield Showgrounds		www.mansfieldaandpsociety.com.au – refer contacts section	Mount Battery Rd., Mansfield
	Mansfield Trans Shipment Yards	Council	5775 8555	Lakins Road Mansfield
	Euroa Sale Yards	Bob Foster, Saleyards Supervisor	5795 0076	109A Binney St. Euroa
	Benalla Sale Yards		Benalla Rural City 5760 2600	Saleyards Rd. Benalla
Animal Health - DEDJTR				
	DEDJTR Animal Health		Benalla Office 5761 1604 Call Centre 136 186 http://www.DEDJTR.vic.gov.au/	
	DEDJTR Animal Welfare Liaison Officer	Dr Lee Manning	Benalla Office 5761 1507 0417 557 039	
Livestock Transport				
Refer MEMP Resource	Database			
Livestock identification	DEDJTR (NLIS)	https://www.nlis.com.au/	NLIS Helpdesk 1800 654 743	
Pet identification	Mansfield Shire Council Microchip registers	Local Laws	57758555	
Management of displaced animals				
Shelters	Wildlife Victoria		www.wildlifevictoria.org.au 13 000 94535	

Service	Organisation / Business	Contact Name/Role	Phone/email/website	Address
	Mansfield Zoo (native animals only)	David Murphy	0427 354 455	
Horses	Mansfield A&P Society Mansfield Showgrounds		www.mansfieldaandpsociety.com.au – refer contacts section	
Relief support network	Community Animal Relief Directory	The Bushfire Foundation	http://www.thebushfirefoundation.org/animaldisasterrelief/community-releif-stations/	
Wildlife Rehabilitators	Wildlife Victoria		www.wildlifevictoria.org.au 13 000 94535	
Wildlife Rescue Teams	Wildlife Victoria		www.wildlifevictoria.org.au 13 000 94535	
Horse Placement Register	Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria	For horses "Free to Good Home"	www.phhwv.org.au	
Pounds	Mansfield Shire Council		www.mansfield.vic.gov.au 5775 8555	33 Highett Street Mansfield VIC 3722
Boarding establishments	Ashley Boarding Cattery		5768 2462	Tulley Rd, Lima East
	Bonnie Doon Boarding Kennels		0417 032 034	208 Glen Creek Road Bonnie Doon
Cage hire / traps	Mansfield Shire Council	Local Laws	www.mansfield.vic.gov.au 5775 8555	Council Offices
	RSPCA			9224 2222
Animal welfare assessment				
Livestock and domestic animal impacts	DEDJTR	www.DEDJTR.vic.gov.au/	136 186	
Wildlife impacts	DELWP or Parks Victoria			
Animal euthanasia				
Livestock and domestic animal	DEDJTR	www.DEDJTR.vic.gov.au/	136 186 DEDJTR Benalla 57611604	89 Sydney Rd. Benalla
	Other (list)			
Wildlife impacts	DELWP or Parks Victoria	Benalla Office DELWP	DELWP Benalla 57611611	
Veterinary Treatment / Triage				
Veterinary Practices	Mansfield Vet Clinic,	Dr Sally Cullen	5775 2055 www.mansfieldvet.com.au/	265 Mt Buller Rd. Mansfield

Service	Organisation / Business	Contact Name/Role	Phone/email/website	Address
	Highett St Vet Clinic,	Dr Jamie Andrews	5775 2784 www.highettstreetvet.com.au	34 Highett St. Mansfield
	Delatite Veterinary Services	Dr Anna Manning	5779 1754 AH 5779 1754 www.delatitevetservices.com.au	7 Chenery St, Mansfield
	Progressive Equine Veterinary Services	Dr Poss Thompson	0457 808 081	Mobile service
Wildlife Carers	Wildlife Victoria		13000 94535	
Volunteer vets / vet nurses	Australian Veterinary Association		www.ava.com.au/	
Triage support	RSPCA		9224 2222 (Customer Service)	
Carcass Disposal				
Landfill Sites	NO council landfill	**(see Appendix D) & Sec 10**		
Knackeries/carcass transport	Auld's knackery		5857 2683	432 Johnsons Rd, Stanhope
	Seymour Knackery		0427 969 303	Light Horse Drv. Seymour
Approvals	EPA		1300 372 842 www.epa.vic.gov.au/	
Water supplies				
Water Authority	GMW & GVW + Water Bores (p 38)			
Donated fodder supplies				
	Victorian Farmers Federation		1300 882 833 www.vff.org.au	
Animal welfare groups				
Mansfield Wildlife Shelter and Rescue inc		Gabbie	http://www.mansfieldwildlifeshelter.com/about.htm	
Jamieson Wildlife Centre		Cathy Raeburn	http://jamiesonwildlifeshelter.vpweb.com.au/About-Us.html	

Service	Organisation / Business	Contact Name/Role	Phone/email/website	Address
Native Animal Rescue and Information	Wildlife Victoria		1300 094 535 http://www.wildlifevictoria.org.au/	
Native Animal Rescue and Information – Central Victoria	Wildlife Rescue and Information Network (WRIN)		0419 356 433 http://wrin.asn.au/	
Native Animal Rescue and Information	Wildlife Rescue and Emergency Service (WRES)		0427 301 404 http://www.wres.org.au/	
Horse welfare	Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria		1300 881 606 www.phhwv.org.au	GPO Box 1991, Melbourne, 3001
Horse Clubs				
	Mansfield Pony Club		**http://www.mansfield.ponyclubvic.org.au/** - refer to 'About the Club' for contacts	Mansfield Showgrounds
	Mansfield and District Equestrian Club		http://madec.weebly.com/ - refer to contacts section	
Neighbouring Local Government Contacts				
	Strathbogie Shire		5795 0000/1800 065 993	109A Binney Street,
	Murrindindi Shire		5772 0333	Perkins Street, Alexandra
	Benalla Rural City		5760 2600	Bridge St East, Benalla

Appendix E - Equipment Checklist & Suppliers

Equipment	Organisation	Phone
Dog collars and leads	Pet Stock - Shepparton	5821 3199
	RSPCA	9224 2222
	Pet Stock - Shepparton	5821 3199
	RSPCA	9224 2222
Halters for horses	Gone Riding	5775 1657 https://www.goneriding.com.au/
	Horsepower Highcountry P/L	5775 2844
Pet supplies and produce	RSPCA	9224 2222
	Rodwells & Co	5775 1588 mansfield@rodwells.com.au
	Corcoran Parker (Coprice)	5775 2542 www.corcoranparker.com.au
	Oakbank Produce	5775 1710
	Mansfield Produce & Pet Supplies	5779 1385 mansfieldproducepet@bigpond.com
	Yenckens Mansfield P/L	5775 1542
	Marks Supa IGA	5775 2014
	Foodworks Mansfield	5775 2255
	Horsepower Highcountry P/L	5775 2844
Blankets/beds/bedding	RSPCA	9224 2222
	St Vincent De Paul – Mansfield	5775 2878
	St Vinnies – Benalla	5762 6507
Portable fencing	Mansfield Hire	5775 2642 http://mansfieldhire.com.au/
General Support & Assistance	RSPCA MELBOURNE	92242222
	DELWP Animal Welfare Call centre	136186

Appendix F - Mansfield Shire Council Water and Resources

Emergency water bores with deliverable water are maintained at:
- Mansfield, High Street
- Tolmie Recreation Reserve
- Merton Recreation Reserve
- Maindample, CFA fire station
- Jamieson, Perkins Street
- Bonnie Doon Recreation Reserve

A mobile trailer pump is located at Mansfield Depot

All resource requests should be placed through Crisisworks and actioned to the MEMO or MRM.

Appendix G - DEDJTR - Disposing of Carcasses in response to Bushfire, Flood or Drought

From agriculture.vic.gov.au website:

Agency Responsibilities
The Emergency Management Manual of Victoria (December 2012) lists several agencies with responsibilities in the disposal of carcasses as a result of an agricultural emergency.

Specific agency responsibilities include:
- *Municipal Councils: coordination of clean up activities, including disposal of dead animals (domestic, native & feral)*
- *DEDJTR: provision of advice about the disposal of dead or maimed stock.*
- *Environment Protection Authority: ensuring that appropriate disposal methods are adopted for wastes resulting from response activities.*

Disposal Options
The traditional method of carcass disposal in an agricultural emergency (bushfire & drought) is on-farm burial. This method is reasonably quick, effective and relatively cheap. However before initiating a major burial program other disposal options should be considered.

Rendering
Rendering is an effective method of converting animal carcases into saleable products such as meat and bone meal and tallow. Rendering plants are located throughout Victoria and some have the capacity to process large volumes of animal material. The practicality of using rendering as a disposal method may be limited by the rendering companies willingness to receive product, suitability of product (eg. degree of burns, emaciated stock, amount of wool), plant capacity and cost of transport.

Knackeries

Knackeries provide an efficient means of disposing of dead, unsaleable or suffering livestock. Carcases can be processed for their fresh meat, saleable hide or offal. For commercial reasons, knackeries prefer to process larger animals such as cattle and horses. Knackeries may pick up sheep carcases but this is usually as a service and generally only in small numbers. It is unlikely that knackeries will accept moderate to severely burnt livestock.

Licenced Landfill *(Mansfield Shire does not manage a landfill site)*
Disposing of carcasses to licensed landfill is an acceptable and effective option for agricultural emergencies. The advantage of landfill is that it may already be licensed to accept animal materials (putrescible waste) and generally has the existing infrastructure to manage long-term containment issues (ie. leachate, gas, security). Another advantage of landfill is that many sites are owned by local government and may already be identified as potential disposal sites under Municipal Emergency Management Plans.

On-farm Burial
When planning for on-farm burial there are many factors that need to be considered. These issues include the environment, statutory controls, logistics and safety. As a guide a burial site should be located:

- *on heavier soil of low permeability and good stability*
- *on elevated land but with a slope of less than 5% (preferably less than 2%)*
- *above the 1 in 100 year flood level*
- *at least 200 metres from any surface water (creek, river, lake, spring, dam)*
- *at least 200 metres from any ground water supply (stock and domestic bore)*
- *at least 2 metres from the bottom of pit to the watertable level*
- *at least 300 metres from any sensitive use (eg. neighbouring house)*
- *a safe distance from underground and aboveground infrastructure (eg. powerline, telephone line, gas line, waterpipes, sewerage)*
- *well away from the view of the general public*

Operators should also:

- *cover the carcasses with at least 2 metres of soil*
- *slightly mound pits after backfilling to allow for subsidence and promote runoff rather than infiltration*
- *where necessary, excavate cut-off drains upslope of the burial pits to direct surface run-off away from the pits*
- *where possible, plan destruction activities close to burial site have good, safe access to site for machinery*

Other important factors that need to be considered are:

- *monitoring programs (as required by EPA)*
- *leachate and gas management (if required by EPA)*
- *use of synthetic liners in pits (if required by EPA)*
- *native flora and fauna planning controls (local, state and federal)*
- *heritage overlays, native title and covenants*

Final site selection usually involves the agreed best outcome after consultation with relevant agencies and a risk assessment of all factors.

Site assessments
A potential burial site should be physically assessed for suitability by an EPA representative. In a bushfire response where there are a large number of on-farm sites this may not be practical and decision making may be delegated to an experienced

representative from another agency. Where practical, a GPS reading should be recorded for each site.

Pit Construction

The preferred method of digging a pit is to construct a deep, narrow, vertically sided pit (trench burial). The preferred equipment for constructing this type of pit is an excavator. During construction, topsoil should be separated from subsoil for later return to the top during pit closure. Excavated material should be stored along one side or at the ends of the pit, depending on the location of destruction. Surplus soil should be heaped as overfill.

Where soil stability is of concern, a battered design should be used to enhance operator safety. Worksafe Victoria can provide information on safety precautions for trenching operations.

Pit Dimensions

In designing dimensions of a pit, consideration should be given to the methods used to fill the pit with carcasses. Generally carcasses will be unloaded (out of tip trucks) or pushed into the pit (loader or dozer) from one of the long sides. Excavators can be used to fill pits with carcasses, especially where soil stability close to the pit edge is questionable or where synthetic liners are required.

When using on-farm trench burial the following dimensions are recommended:
- *Depth: 4-5 metres (depending on reach of machinery, soil stability and depth to water table).*
- *Base of pit to be at least 2 metres above water table level.*
- *Width: Not greater than 3 metres wide (to allow for even spread of carcasses in pit)*
- *Length: Depends on number and size and of carcasses to be buried (volume).*
- *Backfill: 2 metres of backfill to be placed over carcasses.*
- *Volume: Carcase volume will vary according to number and size of animals:*
- *Previous drought experience has shown that approximately 10 adult sheep in poor condition and with limited wool will take up one cubic metre of pit space. (North-East Region Flock Reduction Scheme)*
- *As a guide, allow 1.5 cubic metres of pit space for one adult beast or five adult sheep in good condition. (AUSVETPLAN Disposal Manual, 1996)*

The slashing of the abdomens of carcases prior to burial (to reduce the build up of gas) is not recommended for sheep. For cattle a risk assessment should be conducted to determine if the benefits of slashing outweigh the safety risks to the operator. Alternatively, machinery may be used to puncture the abdomens of cattle carcases before burial.

Personal Safety

Safety of staff must be considered at all times:
- *At least two people should always be at the pit site*
- *Rescue items such as ropes should be available in case of collapsing walls or a person falling into the pit*
- *No persons should be allowed to enter the pit*
- *Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) should be used if necessary eg. gloves, overalls, dust masks*
- *All persons should be properly briefed on site operations and the safety plan.*

Scale of Response

The scale of response will have a major impact on the method of disposal. In a small response, activities may be confined to on-farm burial. In a larger response, communal burial sites may be used for animals from a number of affected properties. Communal burial sites may be located on private land or may be on publicly owned land eg. licenced landfills, unlicenced landfills, quarries, aerodromes or other greenfield sites.

As a response escalates the burial method may change from trench burial to mass burial, where pit dimensions are significantly modified. Mass burial usually requires significant site assessment and enhanced environmental controls. In some instances, an approval to discharge waste may need to be issued by EPA (Section 30A of the Environment Protection Act, 1970).

About this publication

Note Number: AG1264
Published: October 2006
Updated: August 2013
Author: Duncan Worsfold, DEDJTR Echuca

ISSN 1329-8062

Published and authorised by:
Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources
1 Spring Street
Melbourne, Victoria

Disclaimer

Appendix H - Relief Centre Animal Register

Date	Time	Tag Number	Owner Name	Contact number	Species/Breed	Colour	Sign In	Sign Out	Time/Date