

PEST ANIMAL SPECIES & WILDLIFE PROTECTION POLICY

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**PREPARED BY:
ASSET MANAGEMENT UNIT**



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SUTHERLANDSHIRE

1. PURPOSE

This policy provides a framework for the development of strategies to reduce the impact of pest animal species on the environment and the community.

Council recognises that pest animal species inhabit areas of the Sutherland Shire and cause environmental, social and economic impacts within the community. Pest animals pose a serious threat to NSW biosecurity, the conservation of biodiversity and impact on the safety and welfare of residents. A number of pest animal species are recognised as a threat to native animals and plants and the impacts of some pest animal species have been listed as key threatening processes on the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016.

Pest animals compete with indigenous fauna for food, shelter and habitat. Some species hunt native animals while others graze on native vegetation threatening many already endangered communities, populations and species. Increased pressure on natural ecosystems by pest animals has resulted in degraded environments with loss of vegetative cover, reduced local biodiversity, accelerated soil erosion, reduced water quality and increased weed invasion.

Pest animal species can pose a threat to biosecurity and public health and their control can create a major economic burden, so acting quickly on new incursions can be crucial. Under the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015 all community members have a general biosecurity duty to prevent, minimise or eliminate any biosecurity risk. The general biosecurity duty is a principle that can be used by the community, landholder, Government and industry to implement practice behaviours to achieve effective pest animal management.

2. APPLICATION

Pest animals are not defined by a list of species. This policy covers, but is not confined to, animals that pose or identified as posing a threat to biosecurity in NSW or across Australia and/or a key threatening process. It is applicable to all parks and open space under Council's control.

3. PRINCIPLES

3.1 Application of Principles

No one principle should be applied to the detriment of another. Principles must be collectively considered and applied to the extent that is reasonable and practicable in the circumstances.

3.2 Develop Pest Animal Species Management Strategies

Council will develop and implement integrated strategies to reduce the environmental, social and economic impacts of pest animal species in the Shire. Council aims to manage and control populations of pest animal species in the Shire through a cooperative approach with other agencies and land owners.

The strategies will accord with and support other Council and lead agency documents including threat abatement plans produced by the Federal and NSW Governments. The strategies will explore options for pest animal species management and will be guided by up to date research and control techniques.

The strategies will develop actions and performance measures for the desired policy outcomes. Strategies will be regularly reviewed and an adaptive management approach used for their implementation.

3.3 Reduce Environmental Impacts

Council will take active measures to protect the Shire's biodiversity and flora and fauna habitats from the threat of pest animal species. Control programs will be targeted on areas of greatest conservation value such as where threatened species are affected. Council will adopt the most appropriate techniques and take action to control pest animal species on land it manages in the Sutherland Shire.

3.4 Reduce the Economic and Social Impacts

Council will take active measures to reduce the economic and social cost of pest animal species to the community. Control programs will be developed to control pest animal populations in areas where damage to both public and private property is affected.

3.5 Increase Public Safety

Council will take actions to reduce the danger and health risks to the community associated with pest animal species on roadways, public places and Council managed land.

3.6 Increase Community Education

Council will continue to research and gather information on the impacts of pest animal species and their control through an active involvement with other agencies. Council will promote a better understanding of pest animal issues among the community through the use of fact sheets, presentations and providing information for media releases.

3.7 Consult the Community

Council will consult with the community regarding the management of pest animal species in residential areas. Local residents will be encouraged to be involved in pest animal species management strategies and will be informed of any actions to be undertaken by Council.

3.8 Collect and Manage Data

Council will keep a record of customer requests. Council will collect information through surveys and the Customer Request Management System on the number, distribution and impacts of pest animal species in the community and utilise the data to make informed decisions on pest animal species management.

3.9 Provide Funds

Council will regularly review the financial impact of controlling pest animal species in the Shire and provide an appropriate level of funding to assist in the reduction of the environmental and social impacts in urban areas. Council will seek funding opportunities from State and Federal programs to assist with pest animal species control.

3.10 Determine Management Roles

Council will allocate responsibility for the management of pest animal species to appropriate departments in accordance with the Policy. Council will avoid an ad hoc and fragmented response to pest animal species management. Council will ensure staff or contractors are adequately trained in managing pest animal species or implementing programs in accordance with the relevant legislation.

3.11 Provide a Consistent Customer Response

Council will provide a consistent response to customer requests regarding pest animal species. Council will liaise with other agencies including the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Office of Environment and Heritage, Livestock Health and Pest Authorities and NSW Police to ensure unified and up to date information is provided.

3.12 Declare Wildlife Protected Areas

Council will develop a procedure for the declaration of reserves as Wildlife Protection Areas. Under the Companion Animals Act 1998 Council can declare a Wildlife Protection Area in any public place, which may include a pathway, road, bridge, jetty, wharf, road-ferry, reserve, park, beach, garden or any other area, where the declaration may protect wildlife. Signs will be installed advising that cats are prohibited in all Wildlife Protection Areas and that dogs are permitted provided they are on a lead and stay on the designated path. An owner of a cat seized in a Wildlife Protection Area is guilty of an offence under the Act. Any cat seized without a microchip or suitable identification that would allow for repatriation may be assessed by a Council approved veterinary agent and if the cat is assessed as non-domesticated, the cat may be deemed unsuitable for rehoming and euthanised.

3.13 Apply Pet Ownership Conditions of Consent to Major Residential Developments

A restriction shall be placed on the title of all residential lots created by subdivision giving effect to restrictions of the keeping of cats and dogs as pets in order to protect native fauna.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Responsible Officer

The Senior Natural Areas Officer is the Responsible Officer for this policy and is responsible for:

- The installation of signage in Council open space in accordance with Council's Signage Style Guide;
- Ensuring the accuracy and appropriateness of signage;
- Compliance with relevant legislation; and
- Biennial review of the Pest Animal Species and Wildlife Protection Policy.

4.2 Council

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1993, Council is responsible for enacting this policy.

4.3 General Manager

Council has delegated the Chief Executive Officer the authority to meet Council's obligations within this policy.

4.4 Directors

Directors are responsible for ensuring their Division adheres to the requirements of this policy and provide guidance in respect of achievement of the objectives of the policy within their division and the organisation.

4.5 Staff

Staff must adhere to the requirements of this policy and operate within the authorities of their delegations.

5. MONITORING

Compliance with this policy will be monitored by the Team Leader Open Space Assets.

Council will review this policy within four years or at the request of Council or in response to legislative and statutory requirements.

6. RECORD KEEPING, CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

Council adheres to and complies with the NSW State Records Act 1998 and Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 through its Enterprise Content Management Policy and Privacy Policy.

7. BREACHES OF POLICY

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with normal disciplinary procedures and will be advised to the Chief Executive Officer and / or Director Shire Infrastructure, via the Manager Asset Services.

8. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Impound Release Procedures
- Sutherland Shire Council Companion Animals Guidelines
- Services Agreement between City of Sydney & Sutherland Shire Council for the Sutherland Shire Council Animal Shelter

- SSC Mayoral Minute No: 11/2001-02: Low Kill Philosophy

9. RELEVANT LEGISLATION, REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES

- Local Government Act 1993 (NSW).
- State Records Act 1998 (NSW).
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW).
- Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW).
- Biosecurity Act 2015 (NSW)
- National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NSW)
- Companion Animals Act 1998 (NSW)
- Companion Animals Regulation 2018
- Biosecurity Act 2015 (NSW)
- Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (NSW)
- Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)
- Sutherland Shire Biodiversity Strategy
- SSC Plans of Management - Natural Areas
- Sutherland Shire Council Signage Style Guide
- NSW Department of Primary Industries Greater Sydney Regional Strategic Pest Animal Plan 2018-2023
- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 (NSW)
- Firearms Act 1996 (NSW)
- Impounding Act 1993 (NSW)
- Impounding Regulation 2013
- NSW Animal Welfare Code of Practice No 5 - Dogs and Cats in Animal Boarding Establishments

10. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Term	Meaning
Biosecurity	<p>Biosecurity is the protection of the environment and social amenity from the negative effects associated with invasive species; including weeds, pests and diseases.</p> <p>Schedule 4 of the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2015 lists key threatening processes in NSW and can be viewed at: http://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdb/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/bca2016309/</p>
Feral Animal	<p>A feral animal is an animal living in the wild but descended from domesticated individuals. Feral animals include feral pigs, feral deer and feral goats.</p> <p>The Australian Government Department of Environment has information on feral animals and can be viewed at: http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive-species/feral-animals-australia</p>
Key Threatening Process	<p>A key threatening process threatens or may threaten the survival, abundance or evolutionary development of a native species or ecological community.</p> <p>The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage list of key threatening processes can be viewed at: https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/threatened-species/about-threatened-species/key-threatening-processes</p> <p>Schedule 4 of the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2015 lists key threatening processes in NSW and can be viewed at: http://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdb/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/bca2016309/</p>

Pest animal Species	<p>Pest animal species is any animal (other than native species) that presents a threat to biosecurity, biodiversity, the environment, the economy or public health. Pest animal species include introduced species such as fire ants, feral deer and the red fox.</p> <p>The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage list of pest animal species can be viewed at: http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/pestsweeds/pestanimals.htm</p>
Wildlife Protected Area	<p>The NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 enables Council to prohibit dogs and / or cats from public places, or part thereof, where they have been set aside by the local authority for the protection of wildlife. The Act refers to these lands as Wildlife Protection Areas.</p> <p>https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/1998/87/part4/sec30</p>

End of Document

UNCONTROLLED COPY WHEN PRINTED - For up to date copy please refer to Sutherland Shire Council Intranet / Website			
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