

# Local plan for animal welfare in emergencies

## Guide and template

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# Local Plan for Animal Welfare in Emergencies

## Guide and Template

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## Overview

The connection between people and their animals can be strong and diverse. Emergency events that impact on animals can affect communities on a range of levels including socially, economically, psychologically and culturally. In responding to an emergency, the primary aim is to protect the safety of people. In order to fulfil this aim, the following factors regarding animals must be taken into account:

- research proves that the bonds people have with animals will influence their decision-making and behaviour during an emergency (for example, failing to relocate to a safer place if they cannot take their pets with them).
- people will often put themselves at risk for animals in emergencies even if those animals are not their own. This risk-taking can lead to dangerous or fatal consequences.

Research has indicated that the human-animal bond can be extremely influential in a person complying with emergency response directions, such as evacuating, and in participating in preparedness activities. While planning for an animal's welfare in an emergency can improve the animal's chances of survival and recovery, encouraging people to take preparedness actions for their animals can have the additional benefit of improving the preparedness for their own safety and resilience.

In WA, it is important to note that the owner or person responsible for caring for an animal (the carer) is responsible for the welfare of that animal ([State Support Plan – Animal Welfare in Emergencies](#)). Additionally the [National Planning Principles for Animals in Disasters](#) identified that integrating animal welfare considerations into general emergency response arrangements and recognising the support and role of local and State governments, may help improve outcomes for both animals and their owners or carers.

**The owner or carer of an animal is responsible for the welfare of that animal and should include consideration of its welfare in preparedness for, response to and recovery from an emergency.** The ability of an owner or carer to address animal welfare issues may be hampered or prevented due to the nature of the emergency.

Local Government emergency risk management planning may identify animal welfare considerations and Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA) can include a Local Plan for Animal Welfare in Emergencies (Local PAWE) to address these.

In an emergency, when the capability of the owner or carer and any local arrangements are no longer sufficient or effective then the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) has the role and responsibility for coordinating animal welfare services in emergencies, as prescribed in the State Emergency Management Policy statement 5.9.7, and as detailed in the State Support Plan – Animal Welfare in Emergencies (State Support PAWE).

Local Governments are required to manage Recovery under the *Emergency Management Act 2005*. To assist the recovery process, DPIRD and WALGA highly recommend Local Governments develop a Local PAWE to assist their community in responding to and therefore recovering from emergencies they may face, as part of building community resilience.

The *Local Plan for Animal Welfare in Emergencies: Guide and Template* has been developed to assist Local Governments in creating a Local PAWE suited to their jurisdiction, community and risks faced. The *Guide and Template* aligns to the State Support PAWE to assist in the collaboration between Local Governments and State agencies in emergencies.

The *Guide and Template* format is not compulsory. Local PAWEs should be contextualised to the needs of the Local Government and integrated into their existing emergency management arrangements.

## Developing a Local Plan for Animal Welfare in Emergencies (Local PAWE)

Local Governments have a responsibility to develop and maintain a relevant LEMA in accordance with the State Emergency Management Arrangements. The [State Emergency Management Committee – Local Emergency Management Arrangements Guideline and Model](#) suggests a PAWE be considered as part of Local Government emergency risk planning. Due to the effect animal welfare has on the social and economic wellbeing of the community, integrating a PAWE into LEMA can positively influence on a community's resilience for and recovery from an emergency,

As the role for recovery falls to Local Governments, the early consideration of animal welfare in preparedness and response can greatly improve the recovery of the community and economy.

### Planning Support and Collaboration

Local Governments are encouraged to collaborate with neighbouring Local Governments or Districts, private organisations, industry and community groups in the development of a Local PAWE. Sharing strategies and resources is in accordance with the emergency management principles of Shared Responsibility and Graduated Response.

Local Governments can seek support from the WALGA Emergency Management team in the development of Local PAWEs. WALGA represent Local Government on the DPIRD Committee for Animal Welfare in Emergencies (CAWE). DPIRD can also provide support in the development of Local PAWEs through email to [sawc@dpiird.wa.gov.au](mailto:sawc@dpiird.wa.gov.au).

### General Planning Considerations

As the owner or carer has responsibility for their animals' wellbeing, educating the community and industry of their responsibility is important. The State Support PAWE suggests owners or carers should consider:

- If it is likely the animal will be evacuated or remain onsite;
- If transportation is adequate and available to relocate the animal, under potential logistical constraints (i.e. road closures, window of safe evacuation);
- If suitable areas and adequate provisions are available for animals left on a property to minimise the risk of harm (i.e. area at lowest risk of hazard impact, sufficient food and water access for prolonged absence);
- If animals, and their owner or carer, can be identified (i.e. companion animal / horse microchipping, National Livestock Identification System); and
- If they are prepared for self-sufficient recovery and for how long.

Further advice to assist the owner or carer to develop a household PAWE and integrate it into their own emergency plans is available from the DPIRD website under [Animal Welfare in Emergencies](#). These pages include information for owners and carers on how to Prepare, Respond and Recover for their animal's welfare in emergencies and contains factsheets and useful links.

Local Governments are encouraged to use the material available on the DPIRD website. The factsheets can be downloaded and printed for use. DPIRD encourages owners and carers to use the website and to "*Pause for your PAWE*" by developing their own PAWE.

When considering the promotion of community preparedness, Local Governments should consider how they could incorporate animal welfare considerations. The emotive effect of animals can benefit preparedness campaigns and make them more effective. How this messaging is integrated may be part of a more general Local Government communication strategy and not captured within the Local PAWE.

To assist the owner or carer to develop their own personal PAWE, Local PAWEs should consider documenting options or arrangements for:

- access to information and resources for persons evacuating with animals;
- availability of transportation support and advice;
- availability of locations to house evacuated animals;
- management of displaced or stray animals;
- assessment of impacted animals;
- treatment of impacted animals;
- humane euthanasia;
- disposal of impacted animals;
- provision of emergency food, water, shelter; and
- recovery arrangements.

As animals have an owner or carer, their wellbeing is at the expense of the owner or carer through private services, such as veterinary clinics, shelters, food suppliers, as there are no government funded animal welfare services for day to day delivery. This poses significant challenges in an emergency where there is no obligation for a private service to scale up for an emergency response or provide services at no charge.

The State Support PAWE has been developed on the principle of coordinating and collaboration, with the focus on connecting owners and carers with animal welfare service providers, supporting the provision of services and resources.

**The Local PAWE does not place any additional obligation on a Local Government to provide animal welfare services using internal resources. Local Governments may consider the most appropriate arrangements for their community and, in collaboration with local private organisations, coordinate connecting owners and carers with suitable options, information and resources.**



## Local Plan for Animal Welfare in Emergencies (Local PAWE): Guide

The following headings are suggestions only in the development of a Local PAWE. Emergency plans should integrate and avoid repetition and, as such, some sections of the Local PAWE may be better captured within other plans as part of the LEMAs. Where the information is available elsewhere, this should be clearly referenced within the Local PAWE.

### ➤ Introduction

If the Local PAWE is part of a larger LEMA, this section should be brief. Content in the State Support PAWE or the overview of this *Guide and Template* may be of assistance. This section may also include the Purpose for the plan, i.e. how animal welfare fits into the overall response (Emergency Management Framework).

### ➤ Authority for the Plan

If part of a larger collection of documents this may not be required. This could also be captured as part of document control processes. It should be clear who has responsibility for the plan and its maintenance.

### ➤ Associated Documents / Legislation

A list of the related document and the relevant legislation should be included.

### ➤ Roles and Responsibilities

This should be kept simple and clear. The following may assist:

- **Owner/Carer:** Is responsible for the welfare of their animals and should consider preparedness for, response to and recovery from an emergency.
- **Local Government/s:** Provides support as outlined within the Local PAWE, this detail can be expanded in accordance with a Local Government's capability and capacity.
  - List key roles identified as part of the Local PAWE
  - Roles in preparedness, response and recovery can be named here
  - Give brief descriptions of the responsibilities here – in depth role responsibilities are better documented into an appendix in an aide memoire format or summary table
- **WALGA:** Is the representative for member Local Governments on the Committee for Animal Welfare in Emergencies (CAWE) and may be the initial Local Government representative on the Animal Welfare Emergency Group (AWEG) if formed.
- **DPIRD** has authority for the State Support PAWE and may activate the plan at the request of the Controlling Agency (State Support PAWE Part 3).

Any other key arrangements, such as Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs), could be noted here. Detailed arrangements should be moved to appendices.

### ➤ Scope and Risk Profile

The scope should detail when the Local PAWE will apply, it can also include an indication of the risks that the plan is aiming to mitigate.

- Identify extent of any boundaries
- Identify what animal categories are within the boundaries
- Identify any high risks animal categories (i.e. intensive farming, shelters)
- Identify any high risk owner / carer communities that may require additional support (i.e. persons at risk communities, high density housing, lifestyle farming)
- Identify what hazards and associated risks are likely for the region.
- Identify any transient animal welfare risks that are common to your region which may require confirmation at the time of an incident.(i.e. circus, festivals, eventing)

### ➤ **Cost**

The costing arrangements may have been identified separately as part of LEMAs. Any additional arrangements such as engaging contractors, waving shelter fees etc. should be captured within the Local PAWE.

### ➤ **Preparedness**

The State Support PAWE indicates that Local Governments should develop and maintain a Local PAWE, and engage with WALGA as their representative on the CAWE.

In addition to maintaining a Local PAWE, Local Governments may consider other preparedness activities in support of community resilience and educating the owner or carer on their responsibility for their animals in emergencies. Communication is a vital component of managing animal welfare in emergencies, communication plans should include animal welfare considerations.

Local Governments may capture preparedness activities as part of general business or within other documents as part of the LEMAs. Local Governments should consider integrating animal welfare considerations when reviewing their Preparedness strategies.

Local Governments can refer to the Preparedness material available on the DPIRD [Animal Welfare in Emergencies](#) webpage.

### ➤ **Response**

#### ➤ **General Operations**

What activities will you undertake in the lead up to an incident (i.e high risk days) and prior to any formal activation. Such activities may include:

- Community messaging
- Standby staffing arrangements
- Resource mobilisation / pre positioning

#### ➤ **Activation**

When will the Local PAWE be activated and what does this mean for the Local Government.

Consider the following:

- Triggers to stand up roles under this plan
- Notification and authorisation processes
- Prioritisation and escalations

This section can include how the Local PAWE will integrate into the other emergency management activities and may include incident management structures, flowcharts and roles activated. If not detailed earlier, roles activated for the Local PAWE specifically, should be included here.

**Escalation to the State Support PAWE is in accordance with the *State Support Plan – Animal Welfare in Emergencies* section 3.2 Plan Activation Procedures:**

**“The Controlling Agency or HMA may determine the need to activate the arrangements under this Plan where:**

- **Animal welfare is beyond the capacity and capability of the owners or carers, and**
- **Any local or district arrangements are no longer sufficient or effective, or**
- **No local or district arrangements exist.”**

Should a Local Government believe the criteria for activation of the State Support PAWE are met, the Local Government representative within the emergency Incident Support Group or Operational Area Support Group should notify the Controlling Agency or HMA of the situation and recommendation to activate the State Support PAWE.

#### ➤ **Situation and Intelligence**

This section should include where to access the information available as part of the Local PAWE (i.e. resource lists, animal evacuation centres, contacts) as well as the information that will need to be collected to undertake response activities (i.e. hazard size / severity / location, predictions, road closures). It may be possible to request information to assist with response activities from the Incident Controller and the Controlling Agency. Where the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) Urban Search & Rescue (USAR) team is deployed, on request, they have the capacity to collect basic animal welfare related impact information as part of their rapid assessments.

An output of this section could include a template for an animal welfare status / impact report and identification of support required.

#### ➤ **Public Information**

This may be captured within a separate public information / media plan. The management of the release of information to the public needs to be clear and consistent. The Controlling Agency for the incident has the primary responsibility for public information for that event and will be coordinating with other relevant agencies.

DPIRD is developing standard messaging to be included as part of Emergency WA alerts for general animal welfare information. Content published on the DPIRD webpage, DPIRD Facebook Page, DPIRD Twitter can be redistributed by Local Governments.

Local Governments will need to provide any localised information such as locations for emergency animal shelters, volunteers or donations. This information should be provided to the Controlling Agency or HMA so it may be included in the general messaging for the emergency.

At a minimum, Local Governments will need to identify how the general public should make requests for assistance or enquiries relating to animal welfare, and how this information will be distributed to the public, the Incident Management Team and the Incident / Operational



Area Support Group. This may include contact numbers for rangers or community call centres.

### ➤ **Response Activities**

The below headings are linked to the activities listed in the *State Support Plan – Animal Welfare in Emergencies Part 3: Response*. Due to the nature of any emergency response, these activities may occur at different stages, however they tend to be progressive with the early activities focused on providing information and the later activities moving into the recovery phase.

The Local PAWE should document any pre-prepared information or procedures the Local Government will undertake within their capability and capacity in support of these activities. It should be noted that the response actions will need to be communicated to the community and the Local Government Communication Plan should be integrated.

**The Local PAWE does not place any obligation on a Local Government to use internal resources for the response activities listed. Local Governments should consider the most appropriate arrangements for their community and, in collaboration with local or district private organisations, coordinate connecting owners and carers with suitable options, information and resources.**

- **Transportation and Evacuation Route Options** (providing support and advice on transportation for evacuating animals);
  - Document any arrangements with transport organisations (professional or private)
  - Pre identify preferred routes for evacuation with transports
  - Triggers to evacuate with animals
    - If your Local Government area has identified any high risk groups that may need to evacuate early (i.e. kennel zones, boarding facilities, stables) this section could identify priority roads to remain open to assist evacuation or indicators to alert areas to consider early evacuation.
- **Temporary Evacuation Centres / Shelters** (identifying the availability of locations to house evacuated animals);
  - Consider likely community evacuations and what facilities may be suitable near by
  - Lists of shelters, clinics or boarding facilities (Private and Local Government managed should be considered)
  - Set up and requirements for animal evacuation facilities
  - Registration processes for animals at evacuation facilities and for those reporting to community welfare facilities that have left animals behind
- **Stray Animals** (managing displaced or stray animals);
  - Who will manage and when, consider what other responsibilities may be assigned to rangers during a response
- **Access to Properties** (assisting owners and carers to obtain Restricted Access Permits, where applicable);
  - Any processes in place to assist owners/ carers return to their properties

- Priorities for access – high value, minimising loss, Local Government access vs public access options.
- In collaboration with the HMA
- **Animal Welfare Assessment, Triage and Treatment** (assessing and triaging impacted animals, identifying/administering treatment) ;
  - Identify what roles, if any, Local Government will undertake.
  - Identify where will these actions take place (on site, triage facility, clinics)
  - Identify any private organisations to be engaged in support
- **Euthanasia and Disposal** (performing/assisting with transportation for euthanasia or perform on-site, advising on/arranging for disposal of deceased animals);
  - Identify what roles, if any, Local Government will undertake.
  - Identify where will these actions take place (on site, triage facility, clinics)
  - Identify any private organisations to be engaged in support
  - Consider any waste implications for Local Government and emergency waste management plans
- **Emergency Supplies** (identifying/providing emergency food / water / shelter);
  - Donations should be considered here
  - Identify what emergency supplies, if any, Local Government may provide
  - Identify where emergency supplies may be acquired.
- **Reunite** (identifying and reuniting animals with their owners or carers.
  - Follows on from managing stray animals and registration at evacuation centres.
  - Consider unclaimed and surrender implications, may be different from Local Government business as usual policy i.e. extension on how long a stray animal will remain in Local Government custody.

Any organisation named in the Local PAWE should be contacted to confirm they are willing to be listed within the plan and that they understand what their role or responsibilities will be.

Contacts and lists need to be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain current.

By identifying what response activities are within the capacity and capability of Local Government, any transition to activate the State Support PAWE will be improved.

### ➤ **Volunteers and Donations**

This may be captured in a specified volunteers and donations management plan. Animal welfare related donations and volunteers should be considered and communicated to the community.

### ➤ **Other Considerations / Challenges**

A number of other considerations may impact on the response activities listed above and in some situations, additional information may be required at the time of the incident to better address them. This section should indicate what other considerations and challenges may be relevant and any pre-planning that can be in place to mitigate them. If addressed in other arrangements (LEMAs, State Emergency Management Arrangements) reference here.

- **Impacts from Utility Outages**
  - Mains supplied water / electricity / gas / communication networks
  - Redundancies in place

- Sources of support
- **Rescue Requirements**
  - Capability and capacity for rescue within Local Government
  - Private organisations
  - Policy position on rescue and employee safety
- **Decontamination**
  - Identify when may it be required
  - Some hazards may result in animals requiring cleaning before being reunited with owners or carers i.e. exposure to contaminated flood waters.
  - Where the animal has remained with its owner or carer, any information from the response on possible risks needs to be communicated to owners or carers.
  - Any facilities to assist owners or carers should be identified.

**NOTE: If possible contaminates on animals may pose a high risk to the owners or carers i.e asbestos, this should be identified immediately with the Controlling Agency or HMA and any appropriate response communicated to owners or carers for their safety.**

- **Biosecurity**
  - Biosecurity is the management of the risk of animal and plant pests and diseases entering, emerging, establishing or spreading in Western Australia, to protect our economy, environment and the community  
<https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/biosecurity-quarantine/biosecurity>.
  - Activities typically undertake in support of animal welfare in an emergency; such as establishing temporary or emergency shelters and agistment centres, supplying emergency food, accepting donations, may pose biosecurity risks as normal control processes may be interrupted.
  - Considering some basic management practices can assist in reducing risks and assist in future management should a biosecurity event occur post emergency.
    - Identify any high risk biosecurity issues within the Local Government jurisdiction i.e. intensive farming, known / existing pests or disease, companion animal concerns (FIV+)
    - Record the movement and housing of animals
    - Record ownership and identification information of animals
    - Note any relevant vaccination records or medical history
    - Record source of supplied feed or donations
    - Consider adequate separation of animals and procedures for cleaning / waste management
    - Procedures for staff hygiene and any required PPE
  - Should a biosecurity hazard present, DPIRD is the Hazard Management Agency and implements the [State Hazard Plan – Animal and Plant Biosecurity](#)
    - Report any biosecurity concerns to DPIRD
- **Zoonotic Disease**
  - Similar to managing biosecurity risks in an emergency, basic zoonotic disease management should be considered in policies and procedures to prevent outbreaks transferable issues i.e. gastroenteritis.

- Document procedures on hygiene and personal protective equipment
- Consider separation of housing areas (feeding, sleeping, eliminating waste) and cleaning requirements
- Be alert for any emerging issues and procedures for limiting spread i.e. contactless operations and visitor limitation.
- **Mental wellbeing Support**
  - Availability of external resources and organisations
- **Other**

### ➤ **Recovery**

Many of the response activities relating to animal welfare will transition into the Recovery phase of the incident response. All effort should be made to return responsibility for animal welfare to the owner or carer, however, it is important to be aware of the challenges that may prohibit an owner or carer from doing this such as restricted access, loss of critical services and infrastructure and temporary accommodation options that do not permit animals.

Ongoing community communication is very important and the impacts to mental wellbeing should be considered in all communication whether it relates directly to animal welfare or not. Avoid statements such as “no lives lost” or “no/minimal asset loss” as these can have an impact on those that have lost animals or lost livelihoods relating to animal industries.

Local Governments have the responsibility for recovery and should consider the impact of animal loss on the community both socially and economically.

### ➤ **Appendices**

Many of the lists and content identified in the Local PAWE can be housed separately in appendices. This can make them easier to maintain and update. Consider capturing information in geographic information systems (GIS) maps.

Possible Appendices include:

- Authorisations, Notifications, Structures, Flowcharts and Standard Operating Procedures
- Animal Population Estimates
- Animal Facilities
- High Risk Entities
- Temporary Shelter Locations
- Veterinary Clinics
- Animal Welfare Service Providers
- Seasonality (Farming/Events) Calendars
- Contact Lists
- Industry Groups
- Community Groups

# Local Plan for Animal Welfare in Emergencies (Local PAWE): Template

(Headings Only)

## ➤ **Introduction**

- **Authority for the Plan**
- **Associated Documents / Legislation**
- **Roles and Responsibilities**

## ➤ **Scope and Risk Profile**

## ➤ **Cost**

## ➤ **Preparedness**

## ➤ **Response**

- **General Operations**
- **Activation**
- **Situation and Intelligence**
- **Public Information**
- **Response Activities**
  - Transportation and Evacuation Route Options
  - Temporary Evacuation Centres/Shelters
  - Stray Animals
  - Access to Properties
  - Animal Welfare Assessment, Triage and Treatment
  - Euthanasia and Disposal
  - Emergency Supplies
  - Reunite
- **Volunteers and Donations**
- **Other Considerations / Challenges**
  - Impacts from Utility Outages
  - Rescue Requirements
  - Decontamination
  - Biosecurity
  - Zoonotic Disease
  - Mental Wellbeing Support
  - Other

## ➤ **Recovery**

## ➤ **Appendices**

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