

POLICY NAME: Financial Assistance – Ranger Associated Fees and Charges

POLICY REF: F10

MEETING ADOPTED: 14 December 2017
Resolution No. 141217/22

POLICY HISTORY: 261115/20; 220911/19; 230311/23; 260804 (052)



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OBJECTIVE

To provide financial relief for residents experiencing genuine and significant financial difficulties in paying animal surrender, impounding and sustenance fees.

To provide a decision making framework for the consistent and equitable determination of financial assistance applications.

POLICY

This policy covers waiver, deferment or reduction provisions for residents experiencing genuine and significant financial hardship in the payment of Council imposed Ranger fees associated with the surrender, impounding and sustenance of companion animals.

These subsidies may be treated as a community service obligation and reflected in Council's general income stream.

Council cannot alter the registration fees set by the Companion Animals Regulation 2008.

Council must remit the full fee set for each category of registration to the Office of Local Government.

The General Manager, or delegate, may consider hardship matters relating to animal surrender, impounding and sustenance fees. Assistance may be provided in the form of allowing additional time to pay or waiving fees in cases of hardship. Council will not consider hardship applications in relation to animal registration fees or the costs of microchipping.

In cases of hardship the Council Rangers will have the discretion to waive animal surrender fees where there are animal welfare concerns and/or obvious community benefit.

Where the Rangers exercise this discretion a report must be provided to the Group Manager detailing the amount waived, customer name and address, the circumstances of the case and the reason for the decision.

The following heads of consideration will be used to determine applications under this section:

- The presence of financial hardship – the applicant is a recipient of a pension, government payment or is undergoing some other form of financial hardship (i.e. due to an serious medical condition)
- Track record – the past behaviour of the applicant and their animal in relation to compliance with the Companion Animals Act
- Public safety and risk – the animal has acted in an aggressive or dangerous manner and may present a risk to public health and safety
- Confinement – the adequacy of confinement measures (i.e. fences) to contain the animal onto its property.

BACKGROUND

Council recognises that residents may have difficulty meeting Council imposed ranger fees associated with animal surrender, impounding and sustenance.

Council cannot alter the registration fees set by the Companion Animals Regulation 2008.

DEFINITIONS

Ranger fees and charges fees associated with animal surrender, impounding and sustenance fees.

Companion animal means each of the following:

- (a) a dog
- (b) a cat
- (c) any other animal that is prescribed by the regulations as a companion animal.

SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to:

- Residents of Ballina Shire who own or surrender a companion animal

RELATED DOCUMENTATION

Related documents, policies and legislation:

- Companion Animals Act 1998
- Companion Animals Act Regulation 2008
- Companion Animals Act (DLG Guidelines – October 2015)
- Council's Companion Animals Management Plan

REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed every four years.