



ANIMAL WELFARE & MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

2017 – 2022



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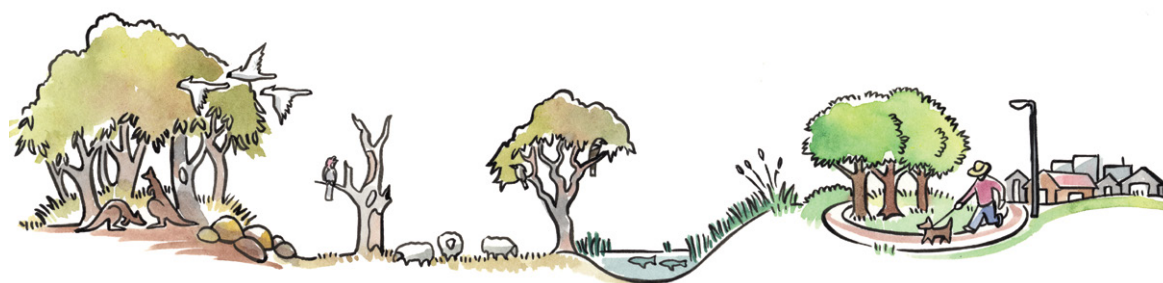
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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Canberrans love animals, be they pets, working animals, livestock or the native wildlife in our many reserves. I particularly love seeing people walking their dogs, or appreciating the wild animals that abound in and around the city—from birds to endangered species and even snakes!

This love and appreciation of animals means our community is very concerned—and has a high level of awareness—about animal welfare. This contributes to high expectations about animal welfare, including how all animals are cared for and managed.

Animal welfare is extremely important—for the animals themselves, the community, the ACT Government and the animal industries and organisations that operate across the Territory. We are all responsible for ensuring animals receive appropriate levels of care and are treated humanely. That's why the ACT Government is committed to ensuring the highest standards for animal welfare and management.

The ACT Government has a good track record in promoting outcomes for animals in the ACT and this provides a strong foundation for the ACT to become an Australian leader in animal welfare and management practice. To achieve this, the Draft Animal Welfare and Management Strategy

builds on the existing framework of legislation, codes of practice, guidelines and management plans already in place to effectively regulate animal welfare and management practice in the ACT. It has been developed with the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, the ACT Veterinary Surgeons Board, RSPCA ACT and ACT Wildlife.

This strategy demonstrates the ACT Government's ongoing commitment to improving animal welfare and management practices. It includes a clear vision and aspirational objectives for all animals in the ACT, whether they are pets, working or wild animals, livestock, racing or displayed in zoos. To ensure this vision is realised, the strategy is underpinned by tangible outcomes and actions to ensure best practice management.

The care and welfare of animals is a reflection of the values of a community, and the ACT community already has animal welfare at its heart. This strategy aims to reflect those community values to ensure animals in the ACT are managed and cared for in a way we can all be proud of.

Meegan Fitzharris
Minister for Transport and City Services



1. INTRODUCTION

Canberra's setting as the Bush Capital means people living in and visiting the ACT have regular interaction with animals; whether it's observing the variety of birdlife in our neighbourhoods, the threatened species in one of our many nature reserves, or kangaroos grazing in our open spaces.

The Territory's significant network of open space and community facilities mean that Canberra is a great place to keep a companion animal.

As well as the intrinsic and companionship values that animals hold, they are sentient beings that have the ability to perceive and feel a range of emotions including pain, fear and joy. Animals cannot advocate for themselves and so it is our responsibility to do this on their behalf.

For these reasons, animal welfare is important. Everyone has a role in ensuring animals receive appropriate care and are treated humanely. This includes being informed about issues affecting animals, practising responsible pet ownership and avoiding impacts to native animals.

The *Animal Welfare and Management Strategy 2017 – 2022* (the strategy) has been developed to ensure the ACT Government delivers a consistent and consolidated approach to promoting improved outcomes for animal welfare and management. In the absence of a targeted strategy, animal welfare and management practices are less likely to evolve to meet the changing expectations of the ACT community. The strategy will also be used to guide future government decision making and outlines all actions in a single document that can be easily accessed by the community.

The strategy has been developed in collaboration with the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC), the RSPCA ACT, ACT Wildlife and the ACT Veterinary Surgeons Board. It has also been informed by discussions with other relevant stakeholders including ACT Government directorates and the Rural Landholders Association.

Animals are sentient beings that have the ability to perceive and feel a range of emotions including pain, fear and joy



Our network of open space and community facilities makes Canberra a great place to keep a companion animal

Preventative and effective management practices result in improved animal welfare outcomes. This strategy builds on previous animal welfare and management practice to ensure outcomes for animals in the ACT continue to improve. It applies to all animals as defined under the ACT *Animal Welfare Act 1992*, including:

- > Companion animals, including dogs, cats, small mammals (e.g. rabbits, ferrets) and other animals;
- > Working animals, including guide dogs, assistance animals, sheep dogs, guard dogs, animals used in law enforcement and horses;
- > Native animals including mammals, birds, reptiles, fish and crustaceans;
- > Exotic animals including pest species (e.g. rabbits and wild pigs);
- > Livestock and production animals, including those kept in urban areas;
- > Animals used for research or teaching; and
- > Animals used for recreation, entertainment or display, including horses, racing animals, and animals in zoos.

The scope of this strategy is shown in Figure 1.

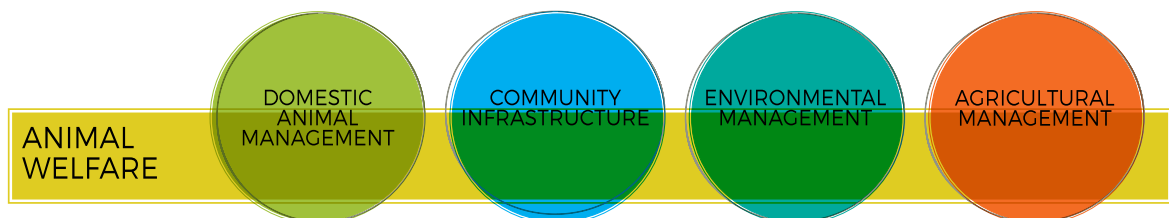


FIGURE 1: SCOPE OF ANIMAL WELFARE AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGY



Canberra's significant areas of vegetation and parkland provide breeding and foraging habitats for native animals and helps to create the lifestyle that is so dear to us in the 'Bush Capital'



2. SETTING THE SCENE

WHAT IS ANIMAL WELFARE?

Animal welfare encompasses all aspects of animal health and wellbeing and all people have a responsibility to take reasonable measures to protect the welfare of animals in all human-animal interactions.

Animal welfare describes how an animal is coping mentally and physically with the conditions in which it lives. The ‘five freedoms’ principle¹ recognises that achieving good animal welfare relies on providing animals:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst, by providing access to fresh water and an appropriate diet;
2. Freedom from discomfort, by providing appropriate environments in which to live;
3. Freedom from pain, injury or disease, by prevention and rapid diagnosis and treatment;
4. Freedom to express natural behaviour, by providing appropriate space, facilities, and social interactions with members of their own species; and
5. Freedom from fear and distress, through appropriate treatment and surroundings.²

Contemporary animal welfare practice has moved beyond only providing the five freedoms and focuses on animals having a Life Worth Living. This encompasses both physical and mental wellbeing, and includes the ability to demonstrate natural species-typical behaviours (Figure 2)³. These elements are outlined further below.

Animal welfare encompasses all aspects of animal health and wellbeing

¹ The five freedoms were first developed following a 1965 review of animal welfare in the United Kingdom. The freedoms were further refined by the Farm Animal Welfare Council have been adopted by a number of Australian bodies, including the RSPCA.

² RSPCA, Five freedoms for animals, accessed at: http://kb.rspca.org.au/Five-freedoms-for-animals_318.html.

³ Elischer, Melissa (2014) *Animal welfare for youth: Part 3 – Introducing the three circles model to youth*, Michigan State University, USA.

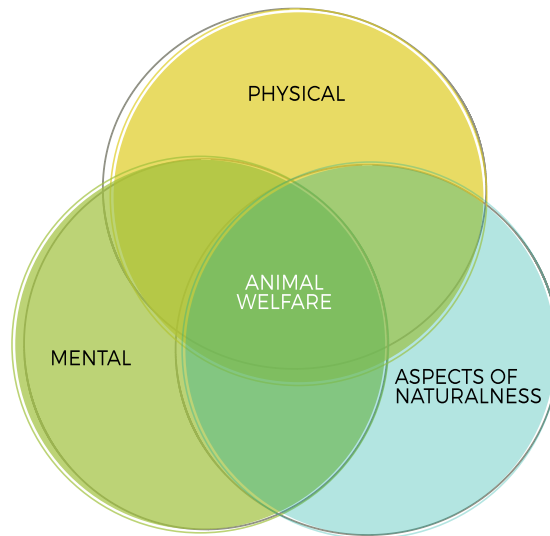


FIGURE 2: ELEMENTS OF ANIMAL WELFARE

PHYSICAL WELLBEING

Physical wellbeing encompasses basic health and functioning. This concept addresses the physical fitness of the animal, including good health, normal body function, and normal growth and development. This element relates to the freedoms from hunger and thirst (Freedom 1); discomfort (Freedom 2); and pain, injury and disease (Freedom 3).

MENTAL WELLBEING

Mental wellbeing encompasses the mental and emotional state of an animal. This concept requires that animals should feel mentally well and should not be subjected to excessive negative emotions. Negative emotions include unpleasant states such as pain, hunger and distress. In addition to avoiding negative emotions, animals should be able to experience positive emotions in the forms of pleasure or contentment (e.g. rest, play or social contact). This element relates to the freedom from hunger and thirst (Freedom 1); pain, injury and disease (Freedom 3); and fear and distress (Freedom 5).

ASPECTS OF NATURALNESS

Aspects of naturalness encompass natural living. This concept emphasises that animals should be able to lead reasonably natural lives. This includes being able to perform important, normal behaviours (e.g. dust bathing for chickens or grazing for horses) and to have some natural elements in their environment (e.g. sunlight, fresh air or social contact for herd species). This element relates to the freedom to express normal behaviour, including social interactions with members of their own species (Freedom 4).

Finally, any use of animals for human benefit should minimise suffering of the animals involved. The Australian Animal Welfare Strategy acknowledges that this includes activities relating to population control, habitat management, humane handling, and when necessary, humane killing.⁴

⁴ Commonwealth of Australia (2011), *Australian Animal Welfare Strategy and National Implementation Plan 2010 – 14*, Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Canberra.

WHAT IS BEST PRACTICE?

Best practice is informed by evidence and includes a range of sources, for example; national and industry standards, codes of practice, advice from recognised experts and professionals, advances in scientific research and community expectations. A commitment to best practice involves regular review and incorporation of these sources into everyday practice.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

This strategy builds on the existing legislation, codes of practice, guidelines and management plans that regulate animal welfare and management practice. The key piece of legislation regulating animal welfare in the ACT is the *Animal Welfare Act 1992*.⁵ The current framework for animal welfare and management in the ACT is at Figure 3.

A summary of relevant legislation is at Attachment A.



FIGURE 3: ACT FRAMEWORK FOR ANIMAL WELFARE AND MANAGEMENT

Everyone has a role in ensuring animals receive appropriate care and are treated humanely

⁵ The Animal Welfare Act includes provisions for both the prevention of cruelty (section 6A) and duty of care for animals (section 6B).

GOVERNANCE

Implementing this strategy is a shared responsibility.

The ACT Government's Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate and Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate are the lead agencies for the delivery of actions outlined in this strategy. However, a number of organisations and groups play an important role in delivering and supporting animal welfare and management outcomes in the ACT. Relevant stakeholders are outlined in Table 1.



TABLE 1: PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS AND GROUPS

ORGANISATION / GROUP	RESPONSIBILITY
Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate (TCCS)	TCCS is responsible for administering the Domestic Animals Act, the Animal Welfare Act and some licensing (e.g. use of circus animals) under the Animal Welfare Act. TCCS provides domestic animal management services to the ACT community, including; registration, nuisance and attack investigations, collection of stray and roaming dogs, cat containment, community engagement and education, and management of the domestic animals shelter.
Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD), including Parks and Conservation	EPSDD is responsible for managing pests and biosecurity, issuing licences to conduct activities involving native and exotic species, managing wild native fauna in the urban environment, managing agricultural stock, and protecting native species. The Parks and Conservation Service also issues and renews nature conservation licences authorising the keeping, import, export and selling of non-exempt animals under the Nature Conservation Act and Fisheries Act. The role of Chief Veterinary Officer also sits within EPSDD.
ACT Police	Liaise with TCCS and RSPCA ACT to respond to complaints, protect the community and seize animals in cases of animal cruelty or attacks. Under the Animal Welfare Act, inspectors (including ACT Police Officers) are able to enter premises to provide assistance to an animal.
Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC)	The statutory body established under the Animal Welfare Act as a Ministerial advisory committee representing community views on animal welfare in the ACT. AWAC is representative of the general community and includes members from peak animal welfare groups, animal industries, business and the community. The AWAC membership is included at Attachment B.
Veterinary Surgeons Board	A statutory body established under the <i>Veterinary Surgeons Act 2015</i> to regulate veterinary practice in the public interest, including promoting animal welfare through registration of suitably qualified veterinary surgeons and veterinary specialists, monitoring best practice standards and conduct of the profession.
RSPCA ACT	Not-for-profit, non-government body that protects and advocates for the improved welfare of animals in the ACT. The RSPCA ACT runs an animal shelter and has delegated responsibility for an Inspectorate to enforce the provisions of the Animal Welfare Act.
ACT Wildlife	A not-for-profit, non-government organisation that rescues, rehabilitates and releases injured, sick and orphaned native wild animals; and provide education and training to ensure a high standard of welfare for animals in care in the ACT.
Custodians who own or care for animals	Have responsibilities to manage and care for animals in accordance with the requirements of the ACT regulatory framework.
Animal care and rescue groups	Provide education, advice, foster care and rehoming of rescued animals.
Animal industries (e.g. breeders, animal clubs and societies, dog trainers and walkers, boarding facilities, pet shops, farmers, research/teaching institutions, animal information registries)	Obligated to conduct business and provide services that meet the standards of animal welfare under the Animal Welfare Act.



3. IMPROVING ANIMAL WELFARE AND MANAGEMENT IN THE ACT

The ACT Government is committed to continually improving animal welfare and management practices across the ACT.

Our vision is that the ACT becomes an Australian leader in animal welfare and management practice.

This means animals in the ACT are effectively managed and appropriately cared for in a manner consistent with the expectations of the ACT community and guided by best practice.

This vision will be achieved through five objectives:

1. The ACT has contemporary animal welfare and management laws;
2. There are ongoing and measurable improvements in animal welfare and management practice in the ACT, as assessed against best practice standards and community expectations;
3. Community safety and urban environmental amenity is maintained to a high standard;
4. Where animals are managed for social, economic and environmental purposes, this happens in accordance with best practice; and
5. Compliance and enforcement of animal welfare and management issues is efficient and effective

These objectives set a clear direction for the future and build on the existing framework for animal welfare and management in the ACT. They are underpinned by tangible outcomes and include; ongoing, immediate, short-term, and medium-term actions to improve the life of all animals living in the ACT. The timeframes for actions are outlined in Table 2.

The ACT Government is committed to continually improving animal welfare and management practices across the ACT

TABLE 2: TIMEFRAMES FOR ACTIONS

TERM OF ACTION	TIMEFRAME FOLLOWING APPROVAL OF FINAL STRATEGY
Ongoing	Ongoing activity for the duration of the strategy
Immediate	Within 12 months
Short	Within three years
Medium	Within five years

OBJECTIVE 1: THE ACT HAS CONTEMPORARY ANIMAL WELFARE AND MANAGEMENT LAWS

OVERVIEW

Positive animal welfare and management outcomes need to be supported by contemporary animal laws. These laws should reflect community expectations and best practice standards, including provisions that facilitate an acceptable quality of life for all animals.

Contemporary laws should be underpinned by a robust and flexible regulatory framework. The ACT's regulatory framework should be able to respond to changes in the attitudes and expectations of the community, animal industries and welfare organisations. Importantly, the framework should be proportionate to risk, responsive to emerging evidence based animal welfare trends and be subject to periodic review.

Animal welfare and management laws are proportionate to risk and well understood and regarded by the community, peak animal welfare groups and animal industries.

OUTCOMES

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 1.1 | ACT laws enable a proactive approach to animal welfare and management, and the humane and ethical treatment of animals |
| 1.2 | ACT regulatory framework facilitates positive animal management and welfare practices and encourages improvements in animal welfare outcomes |
| 1.3 | Processes are in place to drive continuous improvement of ACT's regulatory framework based on evidence, national standards and community expectations |
| 1.4 | Animal management and welfare laws are proportionate to risk and well understood and regarded by the community, peak animal welfare groups and animal industries |



Our vision is that the ACT becomes an Australian leader in animal welfare and management practice

ACTIONS

1.1

ACT LAWS ENABLE A PROACTIVE APPROACH TO ANIMAL WELFARE AND MANAGEMENT, AND THE HUMANE AND ETHICAL TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

	ACTION	LEAD AGENCY
1.1.1	Conduct a review of animal welfare and management laws in the ACT.	TCCS with EPSDD

1.2

ACT REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FACILITATES POSITIVE ANIMAL WELFARE AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND ENCOURAGES IMPROVEMENTS IN ANIMAL WELFARE OUTCOMES

	ACTION	LEAD AGENCY
1.2.1	Conduct a review of animal welfare and management regulations and codes of practice in the ACT.	TCCS with AWAC
1.2.2	Review the commercial and industrial areas development tables and/or codes of the Territory Plan to allow animal care facilities as a permitted use.	EPSDD
1.2.3	Develop mechanisms for periodic review of codes of practice and standard operating procedures to reflect best practice animal welfare and management outcomes.	TCCS
1.2.4	Improve animal management systems and processes for animal identification and reunification, including through registration systems.	TCCS



1.3	PROCESSES ARE IN PLACE TO DRIVE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF ACT'S REGULATORY FRAMEWORK BASED ON EVIDENCE, NATIONAL STANDARDS AND COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS	
	ACTION	LEAD AGENCY
1.3.1	Review of governance arrangements for the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee to support its role as an expert advisory group.	TCCS with AWAC
1.3.2	Adaptive management processes are developed to update legislation, codes of practice and standard operating procedures as animal welfare and management issues emerge and to reflect best practice.	TCCS
1.3.3	Systems and processes are developed to monitor and report on emerging trends and issues for animal welfare and management practice.	TCCS
1.3.4	In addition to the reviews outlined in this strategy, a legislative review of the <i>Domestic Animals Act 2000</i> and the <i>Animal Welfare Act 1992</i> will be conducted as required a minimum of every five years.	TCCS with AWAC

1.4	ANIMAL WELFARE AND MANAGEMENT LAWS ARE PROPORTIONATE TO RISK AND WELL UNDERSTOOD AND REGARDED BY THE COMMUNITY, PEAK ANIMAL WELFARE GROUPS AND ANIMAL INDUSTRIES	
	ACTION	LEAD AGENCY
1.4.1	Undertake community engagement activities to improve ACT government knowledge of community expectations and behaviours related to animal welfare and management issues (linked to Actions 3.1.1 and 5.2.1).	TCCS
1.4.2	Improve availability of information to the community and industry groups on animal welfare and management legislation and associated codes.	TCCS with EPSDD
1.4.3	Develop risk based standards and procedures for Animal Welfare Inspectorates as appointed under the <i>Animal Welfare Act 1992</i> .	TCCS with RSPCA ACT

OBJECTIVE 2: THERE ARE ONGOING AND MEASURABLE IMPROVEMENTS IN ANIMAL WELFARE AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICE IN THE ACT, AS ASSESSED AGAINST BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS AND COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

OVERVIEW

Everyone plays a part in best practice animal welfare and management in the ACT. We are all responsible for the animals in our care and animals that are affected by our activities.

When the community is informed, they are able to make better decisions. They also need to be supported to meet their obligations and responsibilities to animals. ACT Government, animal industries and welfare organisations all have a role in educating the community about best practice animal management and care. This information should be based on a body of evidence that is actively and continually improved. It should be provided in a range of formats and be easily accessible.

An ongoing and measurable improvement in animal welfare and management requires cooperation, collaboration and partnership. This strategy aims to identify innovative partnerships and areas to target investment to ensure vulnerable animals are supported and the life of animals in the ACT is improved.

OUTCOMES

- 2.1** Custodians, animal industries and the community have the information, knowledge and skills to fulfil their animal welfare and management responsibilities
- 2.2** Implement approaches to support people's commitment and ability to fulfil their animal welfare and management responsibilities
- 2.3** Collaborative and innovative approaches and partnerships drive improvements in animal welfare



ACTIONS

2.1

CUSTODIANS, ANIMAL INDUSTRIES AND THE COMMUNITY HAVE THE INFORMATION, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO FULFIL THEIR ANIMAL WELFARE AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

	ACTION	LEAD AGENCY
2.1.1	Undertake a community education campaign to promote and influence public understanding and opinions on their animal welfare and management responsibilities.	TCCS with EPSDD; RSPCA ACT; ACT Wildlife
2.1.2	Implement mandatory training on appropriate animal handling and management techniques to improve animal welfare outcomes, including demonstrated ongoing education for authorised officers, ACT Government service providers and authorised carers.	TCCS with EPSDD; RSPCA ACT; ACT Wildlife
2.1.3	Identify opportunities, in collaboration with relevant ACT Government agencies, to educate the community on best practice welfare. Opportunities should be targeted towards trends and high risk issues.	TCCS with AWAC; EPSDD
2.1.4	Investigate options to introduce minimum qualification requirements for pet services, including grooming services, in the ACT.	TCCS with AWAC; RSPCA ACT

2.2

IMPLEMENT APPROACHES TO SUPPORT PEOPLE'S COMMITMENT AND ABILITY TO FULFIL THEIR ANIMAL WELFARE AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

	ACTION	LEAD AGENCY
2.2.1	Introduce non-punitive regulatory mechanisms to incentivise positive animal welfare and management practices.	TCCS with RSPCA ACT; EPSDD

2.3

COLLABORATIVE AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES AND PARTNERSHIPS DRIVE IMPROVEMENTS IN ANIMAL WELFARE

	ACTION	LEAD AGENCY
2.3.1	Formalise arrangements with ACT Police to respond more efficiently and effectively to animal welfare and management issues.	TCCS with ACT Police
2.3.2	Identify and implement agreed opportunities for collaboration to support vulnerable animals.	TCCS with relevant ACT Government Directorates
2.3.3	Promote awareness of best practice animal welfare standards for ACT Government agencies.	TCCS



OBJECTIVE 3: COMMUNITY SAFETY AND URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL AMENITY IS MAINTAINED TO A HIGH STANDARD

OVERVIEW

Canberra has a reputation for being a liveable and pet friendly city. This reputation is supported by ACT Government policies and plans and by Canberrans demonstrating they are responsible custodians for their animals.

In order to maintain community safety and urban environmental amenity, the ACT Government requires resources to deliver proactive management activities, as well as to respond efficiently and effectively to instances of animal nuisance and attacks and to respond appropriately to welfare concerns.

This strategy proposes actions that improve community safety and urban environmental amenity. Actions include developing policies to manage domestic animals in urban areas and introducing measures which support targeted investment in community infrastructure to facilitate responsible animal management.

OUTCOMES

- 3.1** ACT Government is able to fulfil its animal welfare and management responsibilities efficiently and effectively
- 3.2** Service partners are able to fulfil their agreed roles efficiently and effectively
- 3.3** Community infrastructure supports domestic animals to enjoy natural behaviours in a safe urban environment
- 3.4** Custodians are aware of and comply with measures to keep the community safe and maintain urban environmental amenity



ACTIONS

3.1

ACT GOVERNMENT IS ABLE TO FULFIL ITS ANIMAL WELFARE AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY

	ACTION	LEAD AGENCY
3.1.1	Undertake community engagement activities to improve ACT government knowledge of community expectations, including expected service levels, related to animal welfare and management activities (linked to Actions 1.4.1 and 5.2.1).	TCCS
3.1.2	Explore options for an ACT Government Vet with operational responsibilities for domestic animals.	TCCS
3.1.3	Review of animal welfare and management organisational structure, staffing levels, training and skills.	TCCS
3.1.4	Investment is prioritised for automated systems to improve efficiency.	TCCS
3.1.5	Develop policies and where necessary revise regulations to manage domestic animals other than companion animals in urban areas.	TCCS with EPSDD
3.1.6	Additional investment in fit for purpose facilities to care for and manage domestic animals in the custodianship of the ACT Government. Facilities should cater for current and future demand.	TCCS with Treasury

3.2

SERVICE PARTNERS ARE ABLE TO FULFIL THEIR AGREED ROLES EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY

	ACTION	LEAD AGENCY
3.2.1	Conduct a review of services to be outsourced to external service providers, considering existing Government commitments.	TCCS with EPSDD
3.2.2	Review funding arrangements, including longer-term service level agreements and inclusions with the aim of providing partners and ACT Government with improved certainty.	TCCS with EPSDD
3.2.3	Review reporting arrangements with service partners to ensure government is able to efficiently and effectively report on animal welfare and management outcomes in the ACT and expenditure of public funds.	TCCS



3.3

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORTS DOMESTIC ANIMALS TO ENJOY NATURAL BEHAVIOURS IN A SAFE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

	ACTION	LEAD AGENCY
3.3.1	New and upgraded community infrastructure is informed by information on the breed, type and number of domestic animals in the ACT, community demand and availability of suitable locations.	TCCS with EPSDD; Treasury
3.3.2	Review of alternative funding arrangements and grants for provision and improvement of community infrastructure.	TCCS with EPSDD

3.4

CUSTODIANS ARE AWARE OF AND COMPLY WITH MEASURES TO KEEP THE COMMUNITY SAFE AND MAINTAIN URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL AMENITY

	ACTION	LEAD AGENCY
3.4.1	Implement a program of proactive monitoring of dog exercise and cat containment areas and incorporate measures as part of the compliance and enforcement program (refer to Action 5.1.2).	TCCS
3.4.2	Investigate options for enhancing infrastructure to improve custodians' compliance with requirements to keep environmental amenity high.	TCCS
3.4.3	Investigate options for a community reporting system to increase compliance with requirements that protect community safety and environmental amenity.	TCCS

OBJECTIVE 4: WHERE ANIMALS ARE MANAGED FOR SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL PURPOSES, THIS HAPPENS IN ACCORDANCE WITH BEST PRACTICE

OVERVIEW

As part of responsible social, economic and environmental management, the ACT Government has a role in managing both individual animals and animal populations.

Management of domestic animals and some populations of wild animals improve social outcomes and help to keep Canberrans safe. Responsible management of domestic species and wild animals can also reduce impacts on the environment and the community.

In addition to providing social and environmental benefits, management of livestock forms an important part of the ACT economy. Good welfare and management practices improve economic outcomes for producers. Adopting best practice approaches also helps to meet the high expectations the community has about how production animals are treated during their life.

When undertaking environmental management activities, impacted animals can include exotic pest species (e.g. foxes and feral cats), native species (e.g. kangaroos), domestic species that are not appropriately managed by those that care for them (e.g. roaming and stray cats) and wild native animals managed for improved conservation outcomes.

ACT Government has a number of policies and management plans which aim to manage negative impacts to the community, environment and economy, for example cat containment areas. In addition to these plans, national codes of practice guide management activities. Where management intervention is required, it is important that activities occur in a humane and ethical way.





OUTCOMES

- 4.1** Responsible pet ownership is promoted to manage the impact of domestic species on the environment and community
- 4.2** Populations of pest species are managed in a humane and ethical manner
- 4.3** Populations of native species are managed in a humane and ethical manner
- 4.4** Captive animals kept for conservation purposes are managed in a humane and ethical manner
- 4.5** Captive animals used for education and research purposes are managed in a humane and ethical manner
- 4.6** Animals kept for entertainment and display are managed in a humane and ethical manner
- 4.7** Livestock and animals used for production are managed in a humane and ethical manner
- 4.8** Domestic animals kept for recreational purposes are managed in a humane and ethical manner

ACTIONS

4.1

RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP IS PROMOTED TO MANAGE THE IMPACT OF DOMESTIC SPECIES ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY

	ACTION	LEAD AGENCY
4.1.1	Undertake community education on responsible pet ownership (Refer to Action 2.1.1).	TCCS
4.1.2	Develop and implement policies and management plans to promote responsible pet ownership and reduce the impact of domestic species on the environment and the community.	EPSDD with TCCS
4.1.3	Investigate feasibility and options for expanding cat containment areas in new and existing urban areas of the ACT.	EPSDD with TCCS

4.2

POPULATIONS OF PEST SPECIES ARE MANAGED IN A HUMANE AND ETHICAL MANNER

	ACTION	LEAD AGENCY
4.2.1	Continue to implement the ACT <i>Pest Animal Management Strategy 2012-2022</i> .	EPSDD
4.2.2	Continue to undertake animal welfare and management practices for the management of pest species in accordance with the relevant national model code of practice for the humane control of feral animals. Where a national code does not exist, adopt or develop another code or procedure recognised as best practice (linked to Action 1.2.1).	EPSDD



4.3	POPULATIONS OF NATIVE SPECIES ARE MANAGED IN A HUMANE AND ETHICAL MANNER	
	ACTION	LEAD AGENCY
4.3.1	Develop and implement management plans for controlled native species under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 2014</i> .	EPSDD
4.3.2	Species are managed in accordance with relevant codes of practice and the requirements of the <i>Nature Conservation Act 2014</i> .	EPSDD

4.4	CAPTIVE ANIMALS KEPT FOR CONSERVATION PURPOSES ARE MANAGED IN A HUMANE AND ETHICAL MANNER	
	ACTION	LEAD AGENCY
4.4.1	Continue to prepare and implement management plans as required for captive animals kept for conservation and managed by the ACT Government.	EPSDD
4.4.2	Continue to undertake animal welfare and management practices for captive animals kept for conservation in accordance with the relevant National Code of Practice. Where a national code does not exist, develop another code, or procedure recognised as best practice (linked to Action 1.2.1).	TCCS with EPSDD
4.4.3	Captive animals kept for conservation continue to be managed in accordance with expert advice from the ACT Senior Ecologist and the Chief Veterinary Officer, relevant codes of practice and the requirements of the <i>Nature Conservation Act 2014</i> .	EPSDD

4.5	CAPTIVE ANIMALS USED FOR EDUCATION AND RESEARCH PURPOSES ARE MANAGED IN A HUMANE AND ETHICAL MANNER	
	ACTION	LEAD AGENCY
4.5.1	Review ACT Government policies and procedures for use of animals for education and research.	TCCS
4.5.2	Continue to undertake animal welfare and management practices for captive animals used for education and research in accordance with the relevant National Code of Practice. Where a national code does not exist, develop another code, or procedure recognised as best practice (linked to Action 1.2.1).	TCCS with EPSDD
4.5.3	Captive animals used for education and research continue to be managed in accordance with expert advice from the ACT Senior Ecologist and the Chief Veterinary Officer, relevant codes of practice and the requirements of the <i>Nature Conservation Act 2014</i> and <i>Animal Welfare Act 1992</i> .	TCCS with EPSDD

4.6 ANIMALS KEPT FOR ENTERTAINMENT AND DISPLAY ARE MANAGED IN A HUMANE AND ETHICAL MANNER

	ACTION	LEAD AGENCY
4.6.1	Adapt the national standards and guidelines for the public display of animals for use in the ACT.	TCCS with EPSDD
4.6.2	Review the prohibited exotic animals list for animals used for entertainment and display under the <i>Animal Welfare Act 1992</i> .	TCCS
4.6.3	Develop and implement ACT Government policies to ensure animals used in racing are cared for and managed in accordance with best practice.	TCCS; CMTEDD
4.6.4	Continue to undertake animal welfare and management practices for captive animals used for entertainment and display in accordance with the relevant National Code of Practice. Where a national code does not exist, develop another code, or procedure recognised as best practice (linked to Action 1.2.1).	TCCS with EPSDD
4.6.5	Public display of captive animals continues to be undertaken in accordance with relevant codes of practice and the requirements of the <i>Nature Conservation Act 2014</i> and <i>Animal Welfare Act 1992</i> .	TCCS with EPSDD

4.7 LIVESTOCK AND ANIMALS USED FOR PRODUCTION ARE MANAGED IN A HUMANE AND ETHICAL MANNER

	ACTION	LEAD AGENCY
4.7.1	Review the suitability of the ' <i>NSW Animal Welfare Code of Practice for the Care and Management of Farm Working Dogs</i> ' for adoption in the ACT.	TCCS with EPSDD in consultation with ACT Rural Landholders
4.7.2	Investigate the suitability and adopt codes of practice for other categories of working dogs.	TCCS
4.7.3	Continue to manage poultry in accordance with relevant ACT codes of practice.	TCCS
4.7.4	Continue to undertake livestock management practices in accordance with the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines and other relevant national codes of practice. Where a national code does not exist, adopt or develop another code or procedure recognised as best practice (linked to Action 1.2.1).	EPSDD with TCCS in consultation with ACT Rural Landholders.

4.8**DOMESTIC ANIMALS KEPT FOR RECREATIONAL PURPOSES ARE MANAGED IN A HUMANE AND ETHICAL MANNER**

	ACTION	LEAD AGENCY
4.8.1	Review the suitability of the ' <i>Victorian Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses</i> ' for adoption in the ACT.	TCCS with EPSDD in consultation with ACT Equestrian Association
4.8.4	Continue to undertake animal welfare and management practices in accordance with the relevant National Code of Practice. Where a national code does not exist, develop another code, or procedure recognised as best practice (linked to Action 1.2.1).	TCCS with EPSDD





OBJECTIVE 5: COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT OF ANIMAL WELFARE AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES IS EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE

OVERVIEW

The ACT Government recognises the importance of a comprehensive compliance and enforcement framework to support animal welfare and management laws.

An efficient and effective compliance and enforcement framework needs to include risk based codes of practice and guidelines, community education programs, and proportionate and escalating penalties for non-compliance. Voluntary compliance should be encouraged and the regulatory framework should reward and incentivise positive behaviour.

There are a number of organisations that are responsible for delivering compliance and enforcement activities in the ACT, including: Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate, RSPCA ACT, ACT Police and ACT Courts. However, custodians, animal industries and the community also have a responsibility for animal welfare and management and need to be aware of and comply with their legal responsibilities.

OUTCOMES

- 5.1** Custodians, animal industries and the community are aware of and comply with their legal responsibilities
- 5.2** Custodians, animal industries and the community involved in animal welfare and management have confidence in ACT approaches to compliance and enforcement
- 5.3** Compliance approaches include opportunities to encourage voluntary compliance and co-regulation

ACTIONS

5.1 CUSTODIANS, ANIMAL INDUSTRIES AND THE COMMUNITY ARE AWARE OF AND COMPLY WITH THEIR LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

	ACTION	LEAD AGENCY
5.1.1	Undertake a review of the current compliance and enforcement regime to identify gaps and areas for improvement.	TCCS
5.1.2	ACT Government to develop and implement a compliance and enforcement program, with a focus on domestic animals.	TCCS

5.2 CUSTODIANS, ANIMAL INDUSTRIES AND THE COMMUNITY INVOLVED IN ANIMAL WELFARE AND MANAGEMENT HAVE CONFIDENCE IN ACT APPROACHES TO COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

	ACTION	LEAD AGENCY
5.2.1	Undertake community engagement activities to improve ACT Government knowledge of community expectations and behaviours related to animal welfare and management to influence behaviour and improve compliance (linked to Actions 1.4.1 and 3.1.1).	TCCS
5.2.2	Additional investment in facilities and processes to support proportional and transparent compliance and enforcement activities.	TCCS
5.2.3	Promote processes and partnerships to ensure prosecutions for animal welfare offences are successful and result in appropriate penalties for individuals found guilty of animal welfare offences.	TCCS with RSPCA ACT
5.2.4	Promote processes, including training, to support enforcement of non-compliance with animal management laws.	TCCS

5.3

COMPLIANCE APPROACHES INCLUDE OPPORTUNITIES TO ENCOURAGE VOLUNTARY COMPLIANCE AND CO-REGULATION

	ACTION	LEAD AGENCY
5.3.1	ACT regulatory frameworks include incentives for voluntary compliance with animal welfare and management activities.	TCCS
5.3.2	Investigate options and feasibility for conducting cross-jurisdictional enforcement.	TCCS
5.3.3	Compliance and enforcement systems and processes are updated to incorporate an escalated approach to regulation, including warnings and graduated enforcement for repeated offences.	TCCS





4. PROMOTING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Improving animal welfare and management outcomes in the ACT requires a commitment to adaptive management and continuous improvement at a regulatory system level.

Management of the system as a whole needs to occur in addition to the actions outlined in Objective 2 of this strategy to promote best practice. This will be achieved through a commitment to regular monitoring, reporting, evaluation and review processes (refer to Figure 4).

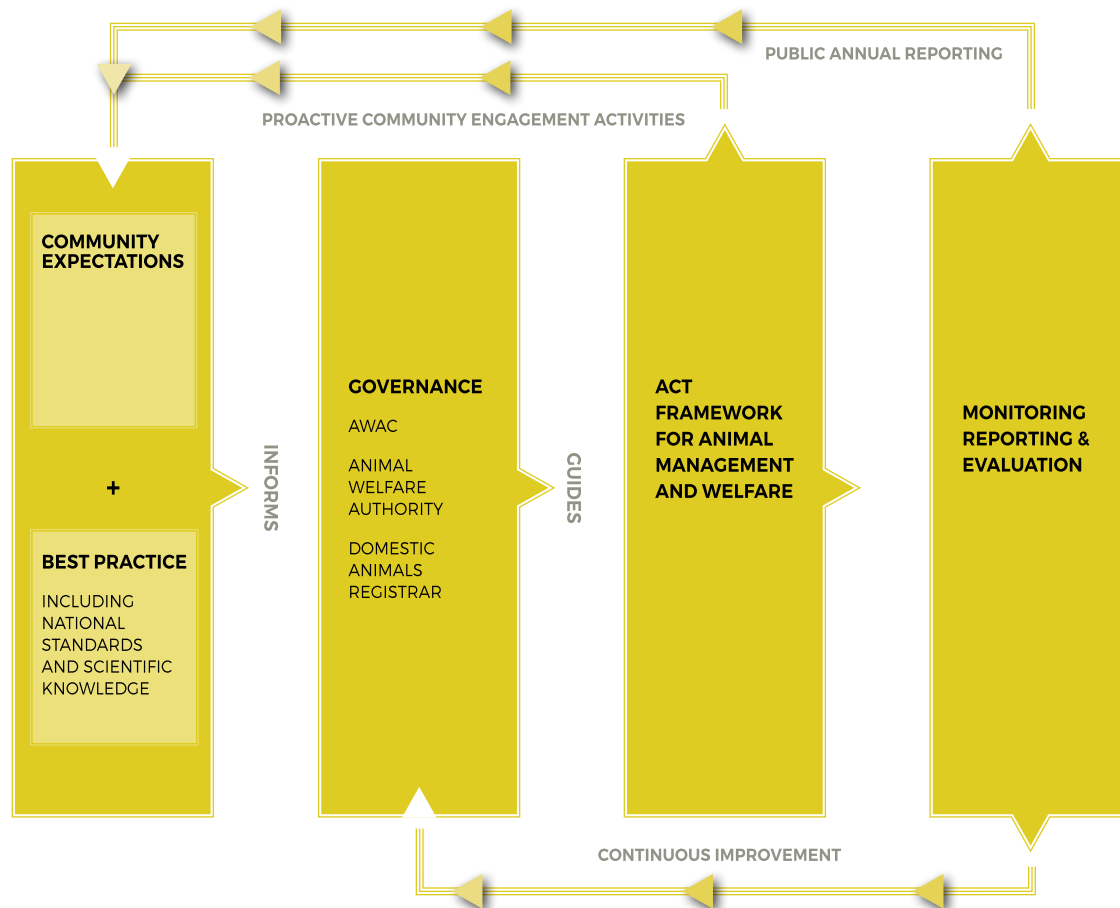


FIGURE 4: FRAMEWORK FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring will be informed in the following ways:

- > Emerging issues and trends as identified by the AWAC, Animal Welfare Authority and Domestic Animals Registrar;
- > Feedback received from the National Animal Welfare Task Group about advancements in other Australian jurisdictions;
- > Information collected as part of the ACT's domestic animal management services;
- > Information on animal welfare and management provided by ACT Government service partners; and
- > Information provided by the community, such as community engagement surveys, queries received through Access Canberra and complaints, including correspondence to government.

Evaluation is important to ensure this strategy meets its objectives. A monitoring and evaluation plan will be developed as part of implementing this strategy. The plan will be guided by the ACT Government's *'Strengthening Performance and Accountability: a framework for the ACT Government'* document.

REVIEW

Regular reviews are also important to ensure that information and trends identified through monitoring is incorporated into the regulatory framework for animal welfare and management.

It is proposed that the following reviews be undertaken by ACT Government with input from the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee:

- > An initial 12 month review to streamline processes and measure achievement against immediate-term actions;
- > A three year review to measure achievements against short-term actions and adapt processes as required; and
- > Review and renewal of the strategy after five years, including reporting the outcomes of medium-term actions and developing a new set of objectives and priorities.

In addition to the strategy reviews outlined above, a legislative review will occur at a minimum of every five years or as required.

REPORTING

Reporting is an important process to ensure accountability, transparency and consistency.

Annual reporting on progress against actions will occur through existing annual reports prepared by TCCS and EPSD Directorates. The findings of the first report will be incorporated into the 2018 Annual Report (i.e. this will cover a period of 18 months).

The links to annual reports conducted by service delivery partners will be published on the ACT Government website.



ATTACHMENT A: SUMMARY OF RELEVANT LEGISLATION

ANIMAL WELFARE ACT 1992

The Animal Welfare Act provides for the promotion and protection of the welfare, safety and health of animals, ensures the proper and humane care and management of animals and reflects the community's expectation that people who keep or care for animals will ensure they are properly treated. The Act: establishes a duty of care for animals; outlines what is considered cruel or otherwise detrimental to the health and welfare of an animal; provides for licences, authorisations and permits for activities involving the use of animals; and promotes awareness and understanding of how to treat animals through codes of practice.

The Animal Welfare Act provides for Codes of Practice relating to animal welfare. These codes provide guidance on the minimum standard of care expected to be provided to animals.

The Animal Welfare Act underpins all other Acts outlined below which relate to the management and treatment of animals in the ACT.

ANIMAL DISEASES ACT 2005

The Animal Diseases Act provides for the control of endemic and exotic animal diseases to protect the health and welfare of people and animals and to protect markets relating to animals and animal products. The Act: provides detection, prevention and control measures of outbreaks of exotic and endemic diseases; including through regulating the feeding of ruminants and the keeping of bees.

DOMESTIC ANIMALS ACT 2000

The Domestic Animals Act provides for the identification, registration and seizure of domestic animals in the ACT, as well as outlining the responsibilities of people, who own, care for, or keep animals. The Act: regulates the registration, identification and management of dogs; the identification and management of cats, including designating cat containment areas; provides for licences and permits to breed and keep dogs and cats; regulates animal nuisance; and provides for the rights of people accompanied by an assistance animal.

FISHERIES ACT 2000

The Fisheries Act provides for the conservation of native and non-native fish species and their habitats. It regulates recreational fishing activities to ensure the sustainability of fisheries in the ACT and the protection of fish. The Act also regulates commercial dealings in fish through the registration of dealers.

NATURE CONSERVATION ACT 2014

The Nature Conservation Act provides for the protection, conservation, enhancement, and management of the ACT's native plants and animals. The Act: maintains and improves the management of biodiversity; provides for licences for keeping and killing native animals; creates and protects conservation areas, including nature reserves; and allows for conservation strategies and plans, including plans to manage controlled native species.

PEST PLANTS AND ANIMALS ACT 2005

The Pest Plants and Animals Act provides for the protection of the ACT's land and aquatic resources from threats from pest plants and animals. It does this through promoting a sustainable approach to pest management, including the identification and active management of pest plants and animals, and through the issue of pest management directions.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2007

The Planning and Development Act provides for planning and development in the ACT. The Act: establishes a system for planning and land administration; regulates land use and development; and designates appropriate zones for the sustainable development and long-term planning of the ACT.

The Territory Plan, established by the Planning and Development Act, is the key planning document which guides the location of community infrastructure relating to animal services, including animal care facilities.

STOCK ACT 2005

The Stock Act regulates the use and management of stock. This includes: regulating the impounding and disposal of stock; providing a permit system for travelling stock to protect the public and manage disease; and regulating the marking and branding of stock.

VETERINARY SURGEONS ACT 2015

The Veterinary Surgeons Act regulates vets in the ACT. It ensures veterinary services focus on the welfare and protection of animals and that those services are only provided by vets that are considered professional and competent. The Act also establishes the ACT Veterinary Surgeons Board to oversee this function.

ATTACHMENT B: MEMBERSHIP OF THE ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
A	Person who is not affiliated with an animal welfare or animal user group
B	Person who is an authorised officer under the <i>Animal Welfare Act 1992</i>
C	Person nominated by RSPCA ACT
D	Person nominated by the Australian Veterinary Association
E	Person nominated by the ACT Rural Lessees Association
F	Person with experience in teaching or research in the field of animal sciences, nominated by the CSIRO or an ACT tertiary institution
G	Person nominated by a community-based organisation involved in animal welfare, other than RSPCA ACT
H	Person nominated by a community-based organisation involved in native wildlife matters
I	Person nominated by an organisation involved in the commercial use of companion animals
J	Person nominated by an organisation involved in the recreational or sporting use of animals
K	Person nominated by the administrative unit with responsibility for the <i>Nature Conservation Act 2014</i>

ATTACHMENT C: DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

TERM	DEFINITION
Acceptable	Acceptable with regards to international norms within the parameters of animal welfare.
Animal	In accordance with the definition of the <i>Animal Welfare Act 1992</i> , an animal is defined to be a live member of a vertebrate species; or a live cephalopod; or a live crustacean intended for human consumption.
Animal ethics	Animal ethics describes human-animal relationships and governs how animals should be treated. It is recognised that there are varying views in the community regarding what constitutes ethical treatment.
Animal welfare	<p>Animal welfare is 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 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.</p> <p>Animal welfare refers specifically to the state of an animal; the treatment that an animal receives is covered by other terms such as animal care, animal husbandry, and humane treatment. For more information visit the World Organisation for Animal Health at http://www.oie.int/en/.</p>
Animal management	Animal management involves the control and regulation of animals. Animal management practice focuses on public health, safety and amenity; and protecting the environment. It aims to minimise animal nuisance and risk to the community and the environment. All animal management practice is underpinned by animal welfare considerations.
AWAC	Animal Welfare Advisory Committee.
Best practice	Best practice is informed by evidence and includes range of sources, for example; national and industry standards, codes of practice, advice from recognised experts and professionals, advances in scientific research and community expectations. A commitment to best practice involves regular review and incorporation of these sources into everyday practice.
Captive animals	Wild native and exotic animals that are kept in confinement (i.e. no longer free ranging). This may include native or exotic species that are used for entertainment or display (e.g. in zoos), those kept in enclosed reserves (e.g. within the predator proof fence at Tidbinbilla) and wild native animals undergoing rehabilitation.
CMTEDD	ACT Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate.
Controlled native species	A controlled native species is a native species declared to be a controlled native species under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 2014</i> .
Custodians	Include people who own, keep, handle, care for and manage animals.
Domestic animal	<p>Any animal that has been domesticated by humans so as to live and breed in a tame condition and depend on humankind for survival. There are three categories of domestic animals for the purposes of this strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companion animals that often live in the home (e.g. dogs, cats, small mammals, birds) • Livestock, including animals that are used for production (e.g. cattle, sheep, pigs, poultry, llamas etc), and • Animals kept for recreational purposes (e.g. horses)

TERM	DEFINITION
EPSDD	ACT Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate.
Humane	Humane treatment of animals is having or showing compassion in their treatment. This can include minimising pain by adopting humane methods of slaughter.
Natural behaviour	The individual behaviours, or the repertoire of different behaviours, that exhibit species-specific survival value and which reflect the ecological niche in which the animal species evolved. Not all natural behaviours are required for good animal welfare outcomes (e.g. predation).
Pest animal	A pest animal is one that has been declared a pest animal under the <i>Pest Plants and Animals Act 2005</i> .
RSPCA	Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.
Sentience	This is the capacity to have subjective experiences and feel and perceive emotions such as pain and pleasure. It implies a level of conscious awareness and an ability to suffer.
Suffering	Adverse mental states that negatively affect the welfare status of an animal and are associated with experiences such as extremes of thirst, hunger, pain, anxiety, fear, loneliness, depression and boredom.
TCCS	ACT Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate.
Vulnerable animals	Vulnerable animals are those in need of special care, support, or protection due to their circumstances, including animals that are: unwanted and/or surrendered; impacted by domestic violence; unable to receive appropriate care due to their custodians' mental and/or physical illness; in emergency situations; and/or have been injured and require urgent assistance.
Wild native and exotic fauna	<p>Wild native and exotic fauna includes free ranging animals of the region that are not considered to be domesticated (e.g. it includes wild cats and dogs).</p> <p>Wild native fauna includes all free ranging native animals (e.g. birds, mammals, reptiles etc).</p> <p>Wild exotic fauna includes all free ranging exotic animals (e.g. introduced birds and mammals).</p>