

10 October, 2016

Animal Welfare Draft Action Plan
EDEJTR,
475 Michleham Road
Attwood, 3049

Dear Sir/Madam

R.E Feedback Submission – Animal Welfare Draft Action Plan.

Further to your correspondence regarding the proposed feedback regarding the Animal Welfare Draft Action Plan, thank you for writing to Surf Coast Shire and inviting feedback in respect to the proposal.

The purpose of this correspondence is to respond to the draft action plan using the framework provided in your correspondence. Whilst Surf Coast Shire Council supports improvement to manage animal welfare in a proactive manner, it is imperative to fully understand how the any changes will work and how they will be resourced. I provide the following response on Council's behalf.

Action – Three Key action areas.

Question:

We want to know whether you agree with the three proposed action areas? You can also provide us with comments on why you made your selection and provide us with any other comments on the proposed action areas. The three key areas for action are: 1. Victoria has contemporary animal welfare laws. 2. Collaborative approaches underpin knowledge, commitment and investment in animal welfare. 3. Compliance and enforcement is efficient and effective.

Response:

Council partly agrees with this statement, however, as identified in your correspondence, work in this field is largely responsive and not necessarily proactive. A review of the legislation may provide legislative powers that enable organisations to work more proactively in the animal welfare space and improve community confidence that agencies are equipped and committed to the overall improvement of animal welfare standards. It will be important to understand how a new system would work and how objectives can be set and met successfully.

Action 1.1: Animal welfare legislation in Victoria is contemporary

Take the survey and tell us whether you agree with Action 1.1 and the deliverables under it. You can also provide us with comments on why you made your selection and provide us with any other comments on Action 1.1. **Deliverables**

- a) Review Victoria's current animal welfare legislation.
- b) Consult with animal owners and industries, stakeholder and enforcement groups, and the community on developing new legislation.
- c) Develop new contemporary legislation.

- d) Implement processes that drive continuous improvement of Victoria's animal welfare legislation, to ensure it remains contemporary, effective and meets community expectations.
- e) Ensure laws are clear and well understood and supported by activities such as communication, education and training.

Response

Council agrees with this approach and feels that consultation will assist any legislative changes that are effective, easy to interpret and workable across the State and organisations.

Action 1.2: Animal welfare regulation is evidence-based and allows for continuous improvement

Take the survey and tell us whether you agree

- a) Develop and implement regulations to support the new legislation.
- b) Consult with animal owners and industries, stakeholder and enforcement groups and the community on developing and implementing regulations, codes and standards.
- c) Develop a contemporary evidence-based framework of regulations and codes of practice that streamlines continuous improvement.
- d) Draft, review and implement codes, standards and guidelines, as required.
- e) Ensure regulations and codes are clear, consider regulatory impact and are promoted through activities such as communication, education and training.

Response

Council in principal agrees with this position and the need to develop and implement regulations that support new legislation. Council believes that it will be imperative to outline through this consultation process what agencies are responsible for the monitoring of the legislations, codes or practices and standards for animal welfare. Local Governments may not have appropriate resources to administer changes and Council would like to understand how resourcing will be distributed and work. Council would welcome the opportunity to review any intended changes and attend information sessions that enable feedback to be provided in respect to resourcing.

Conclusion

Improved animal welfare is important to Surf Coast Shire Council. Having good supporting legislation to assist with the operational duties of monitoring and being proactive will be key to continuous improvement. Council seeks to be involved in the consultation process and is keen to understand if any proposed changes impact on our current operational duties and if so how any gaps in service can be resourced. Council is looking forward to and committed to playing a part in continuous improvement for animal welfare.

If you have any queries regarding this matter please do not hesitate to contact me via email ahewitt@surfcoast.vic.gov.au or by phone 52610558.

Yours faithfully

Andrew Hewitt
Acting Manager
Planning and Development