



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

### SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2024-2025

Ms Nicole Lawder MLA (Chair), Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy Chair),  
Miss Laura Nuttall MLA

### ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Asked By: Ms Nicole Lawder MLA

Addressed to: Minister for City Services

Reference: Budget Statement H page 27

Hearing Date: 24/07/2024

In relation to: TCCS and Domestic Animal Services

QON lodgement Date: 26/07/2024

Answer Due date: 05/08/2024

- 1) What has been the recent trend of animal numbers at DAS?
- 2) [If there has been an increase] What is the reason for this increase?
- 3) Has DAS ever reached capacity, if so, how many times in the past year, and for how long?
- 4) How many animals does DAS have space for?
- 5) In 2022-23, the target for re-uniting animals from DAS with their owner was 2 days. Why was the target doubled to 4 days when the current average is 3 days? Why is the time taken to re-unite animals expected to increase? Is this a soft target?

**Minister Tara Cheyne MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:**

- 1) In 2022-23, there was a 14% increase in impounded dogs when compared with the 2021-22 financial year. In 2023-24, there was a 1% increase when compared with the 2022-23 financial year.
- 2) There has been an increase in stray and surrendered dogs (statistics listed below). There are a number of contributing factors resulting in an increase in stray and surrendered dogs, these include the general increase in population in the ACT (increase in human population equals and increase in dog population), increased dog/pet ownership during the pandemic lockdown, and cost of living concerns raised by owners when surrendering their dogs.
  - a. 19% increase in surrendered dogs for 2022-23.
  - b. 27% increase in stray dogs for 2022-23.
  - c. 24% increase in surrendered dogs for 2023-24.
  - d. 6% decrease in stray dogs for 2023-24.
- 3) Facility capacity is monitored weekly by an internal committee. During the 2023-24 financial year there were five instances where the facility reached capacity. These instances are linked to the occurrences of long weekends which impact both the returning of strays, (due to owner absence), and adoption rates. On these occasions alternative

accommodation is found (private boarding facilities, portable crates). These periods of elevated population end after a couple of business days of operation subsequent to the long weekend, usually within a week. DAS does not keep a formal record of the length of instances of elevated populations.

- 4) The facility has a total capacity of 77 which consists of 74 dog kennels and 3 cat containers.

There are also temporary collapsable cages available which can accommodate smaller dogs for short periods of time in the event of being overcapacity.

- 5) Domestic Animal Services makes every effort to reunite animals with their owners as soon as possible. The target was amended to recognise the legislated 3-day 'cooling off' period for people surrendering their dogs, which allows owners to re-claim their surrendered dog if they change their mind. The change also aims to account for Sunday's and Public Holidays where there is reduced staffing and where the facility is closed to the public, as well as long weekends and holiday periods, where owners may not be contactable or be able to collect their animal immediately.

During 2023-24, the average length of time taken to reunite animals with their owners was 2 days.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2024-2025

Signature:



Date:

5/8/24

By the Minister for City Services, Tara Cheyne MLA