

Attachment G

RSPCA ACT / Domestic Animal Services Responsibilities

The Service Funding Agreement (SFA) between TCCS and RSPCA ACT ([Attachment F](#) of this package and currently valued at \$846,760 GST exclusive annually) outlines the shared responsibilities arrangement between Domestic Animals Service and RSPCA ACT under the *Domestic Animals Act 2020* (DA Act); and the *Animal Welfare Act 1992* (AW Act).

RSCPA ACT are authorised to perform an Animal Welfare Inspectorate under the AW Act and provide for the care of found/seized domestic animals under the DA Act. It is also worth noting that RSCPA ACT also undertake the management of pest animals received from the public under the *Pest Plants and Animals Act 2005*

Unowned Domestic Animals (dogs and cats)

One of the rationales of Project Home was to reduce duplication of services between DAS and RSPCA; predominately related to surrendered/unowned animals. The intention was for DAS to maintain carriage of dogs held in relation to statutory related matters and behavioural issues, and for RSPCA to manage stray and abandoned animals with prospects for rehoming.

Transferring the responsibility of rehoming services to the RSCPA provides opportunity for DAS to focus on education and enforcement, improving community safety through an increase in proactive patrols and compliance activities.

As stated above the current SFA with RSPCA provides for management of cats. The DAS facility currently has no infrastructure and limited staffing resources and training for the management of cats. Further, the growing size of the dog population in Canberra has seen DAS intake rates increase, with current facility capacity limits being reached with growing frequency. Given the dog population will only increase commensurate with Canberra's human population significant DAS facility upgrades will be necessary. The establishment of Project Home will significantly offset this requirement.

Emergency boarding

Current duplication of services in relation to emergency boarding, when a dog's owner is held in custody (either in gaol or mental health unit), DAS will board their dogs for up to 2 weeks.

RSPCA offers the same service; however this is not funded under the SFA, it is donor funded and used for family violence situations.

There is limited capacity offered by both DAS and RSPCA.

Animal Welfare Inspectorate

DAS work closely with the Inspectorate on animal welfare complaints. DAS and RSPCA ACT manage these cases at an operational level with the lead being taken by RSPCA on the majority of serious, prosecutable cases. DAS will attend to less serious animal welfare matters where education or infringement is the likely outcome.

A breakdown of likely scenarios and attributed responsibility below for reference.

DAS

- Failing to provide water, food, shelter, exercise, hygienic environment, etc primarily for dogs and cats and other domestic animals
- Animal trapping offences for dogs and cats.
- Unlawful confinement of dogs.
- Animal Welfare Codes of Practice breaches.
- Animal trapping licence / offences
- Pet business licence / offences
- Research and teaching licence / offences

RSPCA ACT

- Serious malnourishment (e.g. Body Condition Score of 1/5 or less)
- Fail to provide water, food, shelter, exercise, hygienic environment, etc for all other animals e.g. poultry, horses, aquatics, etc
- Animal trapping offences for all other animals.
- Cruelty or aggravated cruelty offences
- Hitting or kicking animal offences
- Medical or surgical procedures offences
- Animal abandonment offences
- Laying poison offences
- Electrical device offences e.g. shock collars
- Possessing prohibited items e.g. cock fighting equipment etc
- Using unfit animal offences
- Violent animal activity offences e.g. using an animal to fight/injure/kill other animals
- Laying fowl and pig offences.