

POLICY NAME: FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE – RANGER ASSOCIATED FEES AND CHARGES

POLICY REF: F10

MEETING ADOPTED: 23 February 2023
Resolution No. 230223/16

POLICY HISTORY: 141217/22; 261115/20; 220911/19;
230311/23; 260804 (052)



TABLE OF CONTENTS

OBJECTIVE..... 1

POLICY..... 1

BACKGROUND..... 2

DEFINITIONS..... 2

SCOPE OF POLICY..... 2

RELATED DOCUMENTATION..... 3

REVIEW..... 3

OBJECTIVE

To provide financial relief for customers experiencing genuine and significant financial difficulties in paying fees and charges associated with companion animals (cats and dogs) management and seized unattended items in public places.

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 companion animals (cats and dogs) management and seized unattended items in public places.

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

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 companion animal management and seized items. 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 companion 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 is clear financial hardship, animal welfare concerns and/or obvious community benefit.

Where the Rangers exercise this discretion a report must be provided to the Division Director 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 – whether the applicant is a recipient of a pension, government payment or is undergoing some other form of financial hardship (e.g. due to a serious medical condition, affected by a significant natural disaster)
- Track record – past behaviour of the applicant and their animal (where relevant) in relation to compliance with the Companion Animals Act
- Public safety and risk – whether the circumstances present a risk to public health and safety and in the case of a companion animal whether the animal has acted in an aggressive or dangerous manner.
- Confinement and housing – adequacy of confinement measures (i.e. fences) to contain the animal, overall suitability of living space for the animal and availability of appropriate housing having regard for the welfare of the animal.

BACKGROUND

Council recognises that customers at times and due to specific circumstances may have difficulty meeting Council imposed ranger fees associated with animal surrender, impounding and sustenance.

Council cannot alter the registration fees as these are legislated under 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
- Public Spaces (Unattended Property) Act 2021
- Public Spaces (Unattended Property) Regulation 2022
- Local Government Act 1993

REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed every four years.