14.2   FIRE DANGER DAYS PLACE OF REFUGE
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(Meeting Date: 13 December 2022)
(Location: Council Wide)
(Consultant / Legal Used: $Nil)
(Cumulative Consultant / Legal Used: $Nil)

PROPOSAL

To provide information to Council on ways in which Council could make a Community Centre available as a place of refuge on extreme and catastrophic fire danger days to allow for residents to seek refuge with their family and domestic pets, as per Council's resolution (25 January 2022)

REASON THIS IS BEING PRESENTED TO COUNCIL

Council Resolution

BACKGROUND

Council at its 25 January 2022 meeting, resolved:

That Administration bring back a report to Council investigating ways in which Council could make a Community Centre available as a place of refuge on extreme and catastrophic fire danger days to allow for residents to go seek refuge with their family and domestic pets. The report should include, but not be limited to:

1. *How domestic pets would be appropriately defined for the purposes of such a refuge, and how the safety of all people and animals in such a refuge would be best achieved.*

2. *How the availability of a Community Centre is best advertised so community members can determine if, and how, to incorporate it in their personal bushfire safety plans.*

3. *How best to resource the proposal including any consideration as to whether a nominal user-cost would be appropriate.*

4. *How to minimise the impact on regular and ad-hoc Community Centre hirers who may have bookings on days a centre may be required for refuge purposes.*

5. *Whether any community partners may be able to contribute to the provision of such a service*

6. *Details on how the success of such a service would be measured and reported to Council*

Parts of the City of Mitcham are geographically located within bushfire prone areas however, the majority of Council owned Community Centres are located outside of the area's most prone to bushfires.

Council has previously considered proposals regarding the use of Community Centres as places of refuge on fire danger risk days on multiple occasions in recent years. **Attachment A** provides a summary of recent related Motions / Reports / Questions on Notice considered by Council.

In February 2015, Council supported a trial with the Blackwood / Belair & District Community Association (BBDCA), facilitating a place of Community Refuge for catastrophic bush fire risk days on extreme and catastrophic fire danger days. Two trials were undertaken, the first between 1 March to 30 April 2015, and the second trial from 17 November 2015 to 30 April 2016, with the following results:

- A total of 5 extreme fire days and 0 catastrophic fire days were recorded during the 2015/2016 fire season
- One Community Centre was made available
- No residents attended the Community Centre as a safe refuge on any of the extreme fire days
- BBDCA consequently recommended to only open a Community Centre on catastrophic fire days

As a result of the 2015/16 fire season trial, Council resolved (23 June 2016) to restrict the opening of Community Centres on the plains as a safe refuge only on declared catastrophic fire danger days for the Mount Lofty Ranges for the 2016 / 2017 Bush Fire Danger Season.

Following the 23 June 2016 resolution, Council continued to make the Mitcham Community Centre available as a refuge on declared catastrophic fire danger days. The 2016 / 2017 Fire Danger season commenced on 1 December 2016 and concluded on 30 April 2017.

This initiative continued to be overseen by the Fire Safety Refuge Group and the BBDCA.

In November 2017 Council considered a report discussing outcomes and considering the views of the BBDCA with respect to the trial. The report is attached for reference as **Attachment B**. The report noted no catastrophic fire risk days occurred over the trial period and, as such, the Community Centre was not activated as a place of refuge. The BBDCA indicated they did not wish to pursue the trial further or formalise an arrangement.

Council did move on 28 November 2017 to directly implement a similar arrangement and set aside funding via the Budget Review mechanism to ensure it could fund the decision should any catastrophic fire risk days occur. This decision was rescinded by Council on 13 February 2018 and a Motion reinforcing key messaging by the CFS that all residents / community members should have their own bushfire plan (which also accommodates pets / livestock etc) and would see Council work with the CFS Community Engagement Unit to better promote fire safety concepts in the community was endorsed.

Attachments:

A. Country Fire Service (CFS) – Preparing pets and livestock for a fire⇩
B. Country Fire Service (CFS) - Looking after horses in bushfires⇩
C. Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) – Livestock and other animal safety during and after emergencies⇩
D. State Emergency Management Plan – Guidelines for Planning for People with Assistance Animals In Emergencies⇩
E. Australian Veterinary Association – Animals and Natural Disasters⇩
F. How to keep your animals safe during emergencies and disasters⇩
G. What should I consider if I need to evacuate my animal in a natural disaster⇩
H. Managing Animals in Emergencies: A Framework for South Australia (the Framework)⇩

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Goal 4 - Excellence in Leadership

Theme 1.3 Services & Facilities: We provide convenient access to a diverse range of information, services, activities and facilities for our community.

Goal 1 - Accessible, Healthy & Connected Community

Theme 1.2 Health & Wellbeing: We build capacity for people to be active, healthy and connected, and provide inclusive and safe environments for all.

DISCUSSION

In preparing this information report in response to Council's resolution, extensive engagement has been undertaken with the following organisations / groups who are deemed to have expert knowledge or experience in relation to the subject matter of this report:

- Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)
- South Australian Veterinary Emergency Management (SAVEM)
- Department of Primary Industries and Regions
- Country Fire Service
- Edwardstown Baptist Church
- Adelaide Hills Council
- Tea Tree Gully Council

Based on this engagement, it is the Administration's view that Council intervention in this area is fraught with risk of unintended consequences. Further direction from Council on the type of model it may wish to pursue would assist Administration in further analysis of aspects such as resourcing, cost, and measuring success.

The following section provides information in relation to setting context and directly in response to Council's resolution from the 25 January 2022.

Changes to Fire Danger Rating System

This 2022/23 Bushfire Season has seen the introduction of a new National Fire Danger Rating System (FRDS). This FDRS replaces state by state models and ensures consistency of approach across the Country.
The system is predicated on a Fire Behaviour Index score which is similar to the former Fire Danger Rating score in use in South Australia, albeit not identical.

The definition of a *catastrophic* fire danger day is essentially unchanged under the new FDRS. A *catastrophic* day occurs where the FBI is 99 or greater (under the old system, FDR of 99 triggered a *catastrophic* rating)

Under the former South Australian system, however, an *extreme* day occurred when a day had an FDR of between 75 and 99. If the FDR was between 50 and 74 the day was categorised as *severe.* Under the new national FDRS any day between 50 FBI and 99 FBI is considered *extreme*.

In practical terms this can significantly increase the number of days considered *extreme* across a fire danger season. To illustrate this, only two days have been categorised as *extreme* across the last two bushfire seasons using the now defunct SA model, with a further 14 being *severe*. If the new National system was in use, all16 of those days would have been considered *extreme*.

This provides additional complexity in any consideration about provision of facilities for the community. Specifically, Council would need to consider whether:

- It accepts the new lower *extreme* rating threshold as an appropriate trigger point for intervention
- It raises the threshold to intervening on *catastrophic* days only
- It considers a model based on the FBI score, which may be more precise but also may be harder for the Community to interpret

Bushfire Safety Plans

CFS messaging in recent years has centred around the need for personal responsibility and advanced, tailored planning specific to individual / family circumstances.

The CFS and Administration are available to assist residents in developing their bushfire safety plans and Administration can ensure this availability is highlighted on Council's website and social media platforms.

Further information of Bushfire Planning is available by the following link:
https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/plan-prepare/

Domestic Pets at a Community Centre Refuge

The Collins Dictionary defines a **domestic pet** as an animal that you keep in your home to give you company and pleasure. This could include animals some may identify as livestock.

The safety of family domestic pets should be a critical factor in any resident's personal bushfire safety plan.

In terms of determining how the safety of all animals in a Community Centre Refuge would be best achieved, consultation was undertaken with the RSPCA and SAVEM. Information was also sourced from the emergency management guidelines and frameworks on managing pets and livestock from Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA).

A summary of this consultation and information is provided at **Table 1**.

Table 1					
	Supports a Community Centre as a refuge for animals	Encourages individual bushfire plans that incorporate pets/livestock	Provides guidelines for pet/ animal safety in emergencies	Recommends evacuating pets to day-care or boarding facilities	Recommends education and incentives to evacuate pets
RSPCA	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
PIRSA	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
SAVEM	X	✓	✓	✓	✓

Both the RSPCA and SAVEM support the CFS model of individual responsibility and ensuring a person's bushfire plan incorporates their pets / animals and plans for an extended emergency.

The RSPCA website recommends that "pets be relocated to a family member, friend, pet boarding facility, pet day care facility or pet-friendly accommodation located in a safe area". If an emergency is indicated, organisations such as the RSPCA, AWL, SAVEM and local council pounds may be able to assist. All have access to emergency facilities.

Please refer **Attachments C** through H for more information from peak bodies / authorities on how to manage animals through emergencies and natural disasters

Based on the advice of RSPCA and SAVEM, Administration has not further explored how the safety of animals in a Community Centre refuge would be best achieved as their advice is unequivocal in terms of it not being an appropriate intervention

Further investigation, if directed by Council, would need to consider the challenges posed by the need to accommodate a variety of pets and livestock, including:

- What type/s of animal will it permit and how many

- Any temporary or permanent caging and fencing required
- Isolation of aggressive animals from other animals and people
- Appropriate shade, shelter, and water provided
- Erratic / stressed animals and owners
- Adequate numbers of onsite staff trained in animal behaviour

Availability of Community Centre as a Support Hub / Cool Refuge

On a *catastrophic* or *extreme* fire danger day, any of Council's currently operational Community Centres as well as the Mitcham Memorial Library located in the 'safe work area' of the City of Mitcham could potentially function as a Community Support Hub (CSH), or cool refuge / heat sanctuary.

A CSH is distinguishable from an 'Emergency Relief Centre' (ERC), Bushfire Safer Place, or Bushfire Last Resort Refuge as there is no legislative or policy requirement for Councils to open a CSH, nor does it fulfill any formal emergency management arrangement.

Council may opt to provide support services directly or by supporting community-led initiatives / facilities, the later likely to increase long term sustainability.

A CSH can be as simple as extending library operating hours during a heatwave. Immediately after the extreme storm damage in November 2022, Library operating hours were extended to assist community members without access to electricity in their homes and Pasadena Community Centre and Cumberland Park Community Centre were both opened on an extraordinary basis. Anecdotally, this was embraced by community members. This test case suggests such a model can provide community value.

The provision of refuge facilities by Council could be a part of any community member's personal bushfire safety plan however Council would need to ensure its intentions for a proposed facility were clearly communicated and reliably implemented on *extreme / catastrophic* risk days. As advised by CFS, a bushfire safety plan is ineffective if elements of it are not predictable and available at all times.

It is impossible to quantify a cost of such a model without further refinement of Council's expectations. Resourcing cost would depend on:

- What activation threshold is used to trigger the service? (*Catastrophic / extreme* / a particular FBI score)
- What day of the week is the facility required and for what period of time?
- Availability of staff – eg permanent / casual
- Impact on existing hirers (and the possibility of foregone revenue)

CFS feedback was unambiguous that if any intervention by Council was widely unknown and not consistently available it would be counter-productive as a mechanism.

Resourcing a Community Centre Refuge

When considering a recommendation for a place of refuge, several factors need to be considered, including the suitability and reliable access of the venue and the capacity to have trained staff onsite to deal with potentially traumatised persons and their animals (if permitted).

A non-exhaustive list of factors for consideration includes:
- What if the Catastrophic day is on the weekend or after business hours? How to manage staffing, resident expectation?
- What is our duty of care in sending residents away? How do we determine it's safe to do so?
- How do we resource additional requirements such as cleaning, catering, medical equipment, entertainment?
- How do the isolated, elderly, frail, or vulnerable residents get to the Centre? Volunteers do not drive, and buses do not operate in extreme heat.
- How far will Council's role extend?

All Councils consulted place emphasis on educating and empowering residents to create and follow their own bushfire survival plans, noting it is logistically difficult to guarantee provision of a Council facility in the context of these types of considerations

Community Partners

One of the keys to any refuge becoming a useful intervention is the ability for most of the community to be aware of the intervention. In that respect some community organisations (eg. Churches) can be a better option as a refuge.

The Local Government Authority provides a handbook on best practice in enabling community organisations to provide such a facility.

Administration did meet with Edwardstown Baptist Church in preparing this report to gain an understanding of the viability of such an option.

An organisation such as EBC has an excellent facility which would be superior to any Council facilities in terms of acting as a place of refuge (shower facilities / commercial kitchens / separate breakout spaces / indoor and outdoor recreational spaces / significant parking etc). EBC have some interest in exploring the concept and would be prepared to work closely with Council to determine if a partnership may be viable (it is important to note EBC did not feel comfortable about any solution incorporating accommodation of pets / animals).

Notwithstanding, any arrangement still needs to meet the logistical hurdles suggested by bodies such as the CFS around awareness and consistency or it will be a counter-productive intervention.

The Organisational Risk Team is working to develop a plan around Bushfire / Emergency Recovery Centre's and will further consider the role community organisations such as EBC may play in that context.

Administration would require further direction from Council about this type of model to better advise on resourcing, cost and success measures.

Measures of Success

Possible models Council could consider as a response to the challenge of assisting the community on high risk fire danger days include:

Advocacy for personal bushfire safety plans:
- This is effectively the current model and is the one CFS recommend Council maintain
- Cost is nominal

Extended operating hours of key facilities on appropriate days:
- This model does not consider pets / animals
- It is easily implementable, and cost is largely restricted to additional wages / utilities
- It is arguably limited as a component of a bushfire safety plan given restricted hours it would apply across

Dedicated community facility / partnership:
- Cost impossible to define without greater understanding of level of intervention required
- CFS Advice is any intervention of this nature must be consistently available and widely promoted to the community

Provision of any model of intervention would come at a financial cost to Council, unless Council looked at introducing a user-pays cost recovery charge. Even if Council wished to pursue this, knowing at what level to set any fee is difficult because demand for the service is undemonstrated / unknown (refer detail about previous trails in the **Background** section of this report). On this basis, it's unlikely Council can introduce any easily determinable financial success measures.

The successful delivery of any model of intervention could be measured in non-financial ways, however, further direction on what model of intervention Council wished to consider (if any) would be necessary to pursue this further. Potential measures may include:

- Actual attendance numbers
- Community awareness (via survey)
- Community satisfaction (via survey)
- Unsolicited community feedback

Functional Support Groups

There are organisations and groups in place to coordinate responses and plans for Councils. Local Government Functional Support Group (LGFSG) coordinates the Local Government response to incidents and are currently working on Joint Operational Guidelines.

The Emergency Relief Functional Support Group (Housing SA lead agency) coordinates practical advice and support services during and after a disaster. Any potential Community Support Hub that may turn into an Evacuation Centre would need to coordinate with this group (and others).

Other Council Practices

Consultation with Adelaide Hills Council and City of Tea Tree Gully, both located within High Fire Risk Areas, on their emergency management practices and Community Centres as refuges revealed that neither had opened a formalised Community Support Hub or refuge, as per current emergency management advice (Table 2).

Table 2			
	Adelaide Hills Council	City of Tea Tree Gully	City of Mitcham
Has a Community Centre or facility as a formalised refuge	X	X	X
Liaises with CFS & other industry experts / organisations	✓	✓	✓
Directs resources to education & capacity building	✓	✓	✓
Supports vulnerable residents through welfare checks & initiatives	✓	✓	✓
Extends an existing facility's opening hours	X	✓	X

In addition, both Councils also indicated that a cool refuge would not be sustainable longer term if a fire did occur – with a potential influx of residents, insufficient staffing levels, and staff availability cited as inhibitors.

Summary

In previous trials when a Community Centre was opened as a refuge on *extreme* fire danger days not a single person attended the refuge, and there were no *catastrophic* days to report. It is impossible to predict if or how many residents will utilise the facility, and as such it is difficult for staff to adequately plan for the fit out, training and preparation required. Council may unnecessarily lose revenue if hirers are cancelled on short notice, yet no one attends. Requiring a nominal entry fee may only detract vulnerable residents further from utilising the facility. Peak body / authority advice in relation to accommodating domestic pets is such intervention is inappropriate and not recommended.

The opening of a Community Centre on the plains to the community on catastrophic and extreme fire risk days is in principle a good community service for Council to be providing. However, after extensive investigation and consultation, current emergency planning advice indicates significant risks

and logistical considerations and the potential for it to be a confusing and counter-productive intervention.

Community Implications

It is the responsibility of individual members of the community who reside, work or travel through bushfire danger areas to be prepared and put in place appropriate plans.

Environmental / Heritage Implications

N/A

Cost Shifting Implications / Legislative Cost Imposts

N/A

Impact on Budget including Lifecycle Costing and Resourcing Implications

Equipping of Centre
Marketing and promotion
Required training of staff
The waiving of fees will result in foregone revenue and may need to be addressed as part of a future Budget Review.

To analyse financial implications more fulsomely, further direction from Council about its intentions for such an intervention are required

Risk Management / WHS Assessment

There are significant risks to Council and WHS implications in opening Community Centres on the plains to the community as a place for safe refuge on extreme and catastrophic fire danger days. A number of these have been identified within the body of the report.

Legal / Policy Implications

Engagement

In preparing this information report in response to Council's resolution, extensive engagement has been undertaken with the following organisations / groups who are deemed to have expert knowledge or experience in relation to the subject matter of this report:
- Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)
- South Australian Veterinary Emergency Management (SAVEM)
- Department of Primary Industries and Regions
- Country Fire Service
- Edwardstown Baptist Church
- Adelaide Hills Council
- Tea Tree Gully Council

CONCLUSION

This report is provided to consider ways in which a Community Centre could be made available as a place of refuge on extreme and catastrophic fire danger days to allow for residents to seek refuge with their family and domestic pets.

It finds, on balance, Council may be better placed to continue its advocacy and partnership with key agencies for the philosophy of personal responsibility.

Importantly, no peak bodies consulted offered support for Council fulfilling such a role / offering such a facility in the manner proposed.

Administration believes the information provided in this report satisfies the resolution from 25/01/2022. A new motion on notice would be required to instruct further action.

RECOMMENDATION – ITEM 14.2

That the report be received for information only.

CFS

000 EMERGENCY (/warnings-and-incidents/call-triple-zero-in-an-emergency/) **Emergency** Dial 000 or Teletype 106   (/portal) **Volunteer Portal (/portal)**   **Government of South Australia** (http

Pets and livestock

The care and transport of pets and livestock before, during and after a fire is something that should be considered with bushfire safety.

The loss of a loved pet is just as upsetting, especially for children, as the loss of a home and personal possessions. You can avoid the heartache if you include pets and livestock when you develop your bushfire survival plan.

Small animals (dogs, cats, birds, rabbits etc)

Forward planning

- Ensure your dogs and cats are identified and registered with the local council to increase the chance of being reunited if you become separated.
- Get your animals used to travel when young. Take them on regular car journeys so they are comfortable travelling and don't get carsick.
- Be sure that you can adequately restrain or confine your pet, as it may become frightened and panic in a fire.
- Ensure your pets' vaccinations are up to date in case they need to be placed in a pet boarding facility.
- **Dogs**: Check you have collars, leads or a harness and a muzzle if dog is aggressive.
- **Cats, rabbits, guinea pigs:** Use a secure cage or firmly tied pillow case or carry bag.
- **Birds, ferrets, mice:** Use a secure cage or box with air holes.
- **Fish:** Transport in a wide necked jar with a secure lid and fill with 2/3 water (include a plastic straw to blow air into water now and again).
- **Snakes and lizards:** Use a secure box with small air holes or a firmly tied pillow case or carry bag.
- **Frogs:** Transport in a small tub with 2cm of water in bottom and air holes in lid.

Relocation kit

If your family has decided to leave early in the event of a bushfire then be sure to remember your pets when preparing your 'relocation kit'.
Consider including:

- plastic containers for water
- small amount of food (dry food is best for dogs and cats)

- medication (such as daily heartworm tablet)
- litter or newspaper
- an information list containing your:
    - name
    - address
    - phone number
    - pets name
    - medical history
    - food requirements
    - vets phone number.

On High Fire Danger Days

- If you have to go to work decide whether to take your animals to a safer place before leaving home. Keep in mind that if there is a fire you may not be allowed home for some time.
- If you are home, shut your pets inside the house so they are close by. Check your relocation kit (/public/redirect.jsp?id=22089) to ensure you have leads and containers of water ready if you plan to leave in the event of a fire.
- If you do plan to leave early, do so while it is still safe to go. Handle your pets firmly but reassuringly. Restrain dogs and confine other animals in cages or suitable containers. Cover cages with a woollen blanket or wet towel and secure all pets in the car.

Larger animals (cattle, sheep and goats etc)

Forward planning

Your options will depend on the size of your property, the number of stock you have and where your animals are kept. However, the following suggestions may be useful.

Identify the 'safest' paddock on your property or neighbouring property. For example, one which:

- contains a water supply
- has clear access
- is well grazed with minimum fuel to carry fire
- is well fenced.

Consider:

- Fencing the 'safe' paddock with steel or concrete posts so it is fireproof.
- What may happen to electric fencing if the power supply is cut off during a fire.
- Having gates in internal property boundaries so stock can be easily moved to other areas without being taken down a road.
- Moving stock into the 'safe' paddock the night before a Fire Danger Day if you will be at work during the day
- Thoroughly watering the 'safe' paddock the night before a Total Fire Ban Day.

If fire threatens

The following suggestions apply to horses but may help you with other types of livestock:

- Hose your animals all over and do not scrape off.
- Remove all equipment from your animal - rugs burn, plastic headstalls melt and metal buckles may get hot.
- Move the animals into an open space with the least vegetation.

- DO NOT shut animals into a stable or small yard. Animals will suffer minimal burns if given the maximum space and can cope well on their own if they can move into the open.
- If animals do sustain burns the best form of immediate first aid is sponging with cold water until proper veterinary care is available.

Bushfire survival tips for horse owners

Are you prepared for bushfire? Have you and your family practised your plan? You are responsible for your own horses. Here is a *sample* kit for your horse:

- Feed for at least 3 days
- Buckets
- Copies of horse identification, veterinary records & proof of ownership
- Spare head collars with long leads (not nylon)
- Blankets / rugs – natural fibre
- Fluorescent spray paint, Livestock Marking Crayon
- Recorded diet for your animals
- Recorded dose and frequency for each medication your horse uses. Provide veterinary contact information for refills.
- Post detailed instructions in several places at home – Animal ID + your photo for any stock left behind.

Ensure you have battery-powered radios and extra batteries and tune to your local ABC radio.

A quick checklist

If you are a horse owner, horse organisation or horse event manager you need to make sure you help yourself, the CFS and your neighbours. You can:

1. Prepare a Bushfire Survival Plan, share it with staff, volunteers, club members and agistment clients.
2. Advise your local CFS if there is an event or "gathering" of horses in your area.
3. Keep informed during danger periods by using a battery powered radio to monitor for bushfire messages (power may go out) or by calling the Information Hotline on 1800 362 361 (tel:1800362361).
4. Make sure your property has a Property Identification Code (PIC) number and that your horses are listed as being on that property. You can get this from Primary Industries SA (PIRSA) on 08 8207 7900 (tel:0882077900) or download the registration application form (https://pir.sa.gov.au/biosecurity/animal_health/property_identification_code_pic). This helps planning in any type of emergency. All properties with one or more horses are legally required to have a PIC number.
5. Uniquely identify each horse with permanent (microchip/brands) and temporary ID (e.g. Livestock markers and tags in the mane). Clear photos of each horse will also be useful. Identification aids return of your horse but you may also need proof of ownership.
6. Prepare a survival kit to last you and your horses for 96 hrs without power/water or help - have this ready at hand for use on your property and to load onto your float.
7. Place your email address on the Horse SA (http://www.horsesa.asn.au/) email list as this will be used to circulate horse related information.
8. Check Firebuddies (http://firebuddies.weebly.com/) (contact list) and Open Paddocks (https://www.facebook.com/openpaddocksa) (Facebook page). These are volunteer services that help you either find horse holding areas in low fire risk areas or offer horse accommodation in a low risk area if your club networks cannot help. Remember that normal agistment contracts are recommended, even for very short stays. Post disaster "stays" can last for 6 – 9 months so setting expectations by the land owner is very important.

View a Bushfire Survival Tips for Horse Owners webinar.

Bushfire Survival Tips for Horse Owners #horseemergency

More information

- Care of Pets and Livestock fact sheet (/public/download.jsp?id=104502)
- Horses and Bushfires fact sheet (/public/download.jsp?id=104503)
- Animal safety in emergencies (https://www.pir.sa.gov.au/emergency_management/animal_safety_in_emergencies) - PIRSA
- Pet Emergency Plans (https://www.rspcasa.org.au/the-issues/animals-in-emergencies/) - RSPCA

In the spirit of reconciliation the CFS acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

CFS GUIDE
Looking after horses in bushfires

If you own a horse, it is important you plan what you will do to protect them if your property is threatened by bushfire.

Safer Paddocks for horses

You may be able to make a safer paddock for your horses, which is a large, open area where there is limited vegetation or fuel for a fire to burn.

Preferably the paddock will have a large water supply, such as a dam, and is an area big enough for your horse to move freely to escape flames as they pass.

The paddock may be heavily grazed or a series of interlocking paddocks that internal gates can be opened to interlink.

Fencing and gates for the paddock should not allow your horse to exit the property as they could become a hazard for emergency services personnel and other vehicles.

Include your horses in your Bushfire Survival Plan

Write a Bushfire Survival Plan that includes what you will do to protect your horses and to practise it.

First, decide what you will do with your horses in the event of a fire.

Ensure your Bushfire Survival Plan is written and placed somewhere that is clearly visible and is practised often.

Your Bushfire Survival Plan needs to consider the level of risk according to the Total Fire Ban rating, and your level of response.

Your plan should have phone numbers for all of the people associated with the welfare of your animals.

It should also include your Property Identification Code (PIC number), which is issued by PIRSA, to help with animal identification and post-bushfire support.

Ensure your horses are registered against your PIC number with PIRSA.

Share your plan with your neighbours.

If you plan to relocate your horses within the property – plan how, when and where you will relocate to.

Before moving your horses, ensure you have identified a horse safer paddock to go to and have a plan on how to get there.

If you plan to transport your horses to another location, do so well before the smoke and fire arrives.

This will help you avoid stress for yourself and your horse by being caught in traffic or trapped in a fire.

If you are agisting your horses, ensure the owners of the property have a Bushfire Survival Plan and discuss your needs.

Government of South Australia

South Australian Country Fire Service
cfs.sa.gov.au

Contact the Information Hotline
1800 362 361 (TTY 133 677)
 @Countryfireservice
 @CFSalerts

CFS

Looking after horses in bushfires

Plan to move your horses into safer paddocks well before a fire starts.

Preparing your property

Consider the following options:

- Install fire proof fencing in your horse safer paddock - i.e. steel or concrete posts, particularly if you own a stallion.

- Make sure the external fences are secure and electric fences have a battery back-up, as power can be lost during bushfires.

- Consider installing a gate between your boundary and your neighbour's property.
  You may organise to open this on Total Fire Ban days and give all stock more room to move.

Emergency Kits for your horses

Consider creating an Emergency Kit for your horses which may include items like:

- Electric fence tape, rods and battery unit for a temporary yard.

- Feed such as pellets in a metal bin.

- Head collars/halters, lead ropes, light blankets, fly veils.

- Basic first aid items like burn and insect bite ointments, strapping and bandaging.

- Check with your vet to see if you may require specialised items for your horses.

- Feed, water and any medication.

Keep these items together in an easily accessible place.

Preparing your horse

On days of elevated Fire Danger Ratings there are several steps you can consider to prepare your horses:

- Practise floating your horses if you intend to move them.

- Practise having other people catch, halter and float your horses.

- Practise moving your horses around the property so they know where internal gates are.

- Remove all flammable items from your horses, including rugs, fly veils, boots, halters/head collars.

Total Fire Ban Days

Total Fire Bans are classified as Extreme and Catastrophic depending on the level of risk for the day.

The declaration of a Total Fire Ban, usually after 4:30pm the day before, should be the trigger for you to activate your Bushfire Survival Plan.

When a Total Fire Ban is announced, consider the following:

- Move your horses to a safer paddock.

- Open internal gates to allow your horse to move freely.

- Remove all flammable items from your horse - rugs, head collars/halters, fly veils etc.

- Check troughs are full, and if required fill additional containers with water for back-up.

- Check your Bushfire Survival Plan to make sure you have prepared fully.

Looking after horses in bushfires

Page 3
CFS GUIDE

Decide whether you will 'Stay and Defend' or 'Leave Early' before there is a fire.

Identify your horses

Micro-chipped or branded horses are easily identified if they becomes separated from their owner.

In an emergency, if your horses are not chipped or branded, be prepared to paint your name and phone number on your horse.

Consider using a grease crayon to write on your horses.

Have a photo of you with the horses in case you are required to prove ownership.

When a bushfire happens

Once the bushfire starts or is close, visibility will be very poor and travel hazardous.

Fallen trees, powerlines, abandoned cars and even fire fighting vehicles can easily block roads.

Even quiet horses may panic in a float filled with smoke or when exposed to the noise of sirens.

You should plan to receive no official warning that a fire is coming.

When a fire comes your way, your personal safety and that of the people with you must be your first concern.

If your Bushfire Survival Plan is to stay and defend, consider the following:

- Open internal gates and let your horses run free within your property.
- Close the doors to stables/sheds to prevent your horse from running inside.

Leaving late may put you and your horses at risk.

Never turn your horses out on the road as they will be in danger from traffic and the fire or could cause a car accident.

Remember to give your horses plenty of room to move.

There is little you can do as the fire front passes, so leave your horses in an open area and go inside a solid structure to seek shelter from radiant heat.

Do not put your own life in danger.

Your horses will usually cope well on their own if they have a chance to move in an open space that has minimum burnable fuels.

Government of South Australia

South Australian Country Fire Service
cfs.sa.gov.au

Contact the Information Hotline
1800 362 361 (TTY 133 677)
f @Countryfireservice
🐦 @CFSalerts

CFS

Looking after horses in bushfires

Past experience of bushfires indicates that horses will suffer minimal burns if given maximum space.

They may gallop through flames, or around a fire's edges, and stand on the blackened, previously burnt area and remain there until the fire has passed.

The main fire front usually passes relatively quickly.

After the fire front has passed, and you feel that it is safe, carefully check on your horses, reassure and calm them, and make sure they have water readily available, then call your vet.

Administer any required treatments or medicines you are able to before your vet arrives.

Some symptoms will not show up until days later, so keep monitoring the health of your horses in the days following the fire.

Re-entering burned areas

Care must be taken returning horses to burnt areas.

Check their water is not contaminated with ash or firefighting foam.

There may be hotspots that could flare up without warning – these can also burn the hooves and legs of your horses.

Partially burnt structures and trees may be unstable and suddenly fall over.

Roots may be smouldering under the surface, which may cause the ground to collapse and injure your horses if walked over.

Bees and wasps may swarm as they try to establish a new home.

Check all fencing is secure and free from breaks or sharp edges.

Check electric fences for faults and breakages.

Feed such as hay should be placed off the ground, so animals are not eating grit or ash with their food.

Good forward planning may protect the safety and wellbeing of your horses if you live in a high-risk bushfire area.

For more information on how to make a Bushfire Survival Plan go to www.cfs.gov.au

For help following a bushfire contact www.pir.sa.gov.au, www.rspcasa.org.au or South Australian Veterinary Emergency Management (SAVEM) www.savem.org.au/

For more tips on how to prepare your horse for a bushfire see www.horsesa.asn.au

**South Australian
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CFS

Animal safety in emergencies

From 2015 to 2018, major rural fires in South Australia resulted in over 75,200 known animal deaths.

Despite this, evidence indicates that many animal owners and managers are failing to plan for emergency situations.

Good animal management includes ensuring the welfare of your animals before, during and after emergency events. Whether it's bushfires, storms or floods, such events can easily result in separation between animals and their owners, and possibly injury or death.

See our range of resources to help give you a good understanding of how to effectively and safely manage your animals before, during and after an emergency event.

All information provided is based on the Managing Animals in Emergencies framework (https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/responsibilities/security-emergency-and-recovery-management/state-emergency-management-plan) 🔗, developed by PIRSA as a guide to the key issues to consider when planning for animals in emergencies.

It also covers the responsibilities of animal owners and what assistance and services that may be available to help.

Prepare an animal emergency plan	⌄

During an emergency event	⌄

After an emergency event	⌄

Lost animals	⌄

Helping with emergency recovery ⌄

Agriculture and livestock hotline

Call for assistance immediately following any emergency event.

Experienced staff can help you with agricultural impacts and urgent animal issues that cannot be dealt with through veterinary or community services.

Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Freecall 1800 255 556 (tel:1800 255 556)

Page Last Reviewed: 19 Apr 2022

Government of South Australia
Department of Primary Industries
and Regions

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INDUSTRIES
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PIRSA

Guidelines for Planning for People with Assistance Animals in Emergencies

FEBRUARY 2018

DISASTER
RESILIENT
AUSTRALIA

Government of
South Australia

Guidelines for Planning for People with Assistance Animals in Emergencies

Information current as of 28 February 2018

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Cover photo: Royal Society for the Blind

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Version 0.1	PIRSA; SA assistance dog organisations; Red Cross; State Recovery Office	28 Sept 2017
Version 0.2	Guide Dogs SA&NT; Assistance Dogs Australia	31 Oct 2017
Version 0.3	Dog & Cat Mgt Board	14 Nov 2017
Version 0.4	Project Steering Committee	27 Nov 2017
Version 0.5	State Mitigation Advisory Group; State Response Advisory Group; City of Charles Sturt	18 Dec 2017
Version 0.6	Project Steering Committee; PIRSA Communications	27 Feb 2018
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April 2020		

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PURPOSE

These guidelines support emergency service providers and others involved in planning for emergencies in South Australia to incorporate the needs of people with assistance animals, where relevant, in emergency management policy and planning, operational procedures and educational information.

Assistance animals in South Australia are usually dogs that provide support to people with various disabilities, including blindness, deafness, autism and medical and mental health disorders. These individuals may be reliant on the assistance provided by the animal.

Scope

These guidelines:

- are consistent with the South Australian State Emergency Management Plan and the frameworks therein addressing animal management[1] and building resilience for people who are most at risk in emergencies[2]
- provide the legal definition of an assistance animal and how they may be identified
- discuss public access rights for assistance animals
- outline key considerations for supporting people with an assistance animal at different stages of an emergency
- provide references for further information.

These guidelines are designed to provide advice and guiding principles only, they are not the definitive policy/procedure to be adopted.

Considerations for people with assistance animals may be relevant to planning for all emergency situations but particularly fires, floods, extreme weather events, spills of hazardous materials, transport accidents, earthquakes and terrorist incidents.

A range of plans and procedures relating to these and other hazards may be enhanced by considering the needs of people with assistance animals.

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[1] PIRSA (2017) *Managing Animals in Emergencies: A Framework for South Australia*. Primary Industries and Regions SA, Government of South Australia.
[2] Red Cross (2018) *People at Risk in Emergencies Framework for South Australia*

Specific areas of relevance include (but are not limited to):

- community engagement programs
- educational materials and that support personal emergency planning and preparedness
- emergency transport plans[3]
- evacuation or relocation procedures
- relief and recovery centre operational plans and procedures
- temporary accommodation plans.

WHAT IS AN ASSISTANCE ANIMAL?

Legal definition

The Federal *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, in Section 9, sets out the legal definition of an assistance animal as a dog or other animal that is:

(a) accredited under a law of a State or Territory that provides for the accreditation of animals trained to assist persons with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability; or

(b) accredited by an animal training organisation prescribed by the regulations; or

(c) trained:

(i) to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability; and

(ii) to meet standards of hygiene and behaviour that are appropriate for an animal in a public place.

Accreditation

There is no standard system of accreditation for assistance animals that applies throughout Australia. Some states have local legislation which provides for the accreditation of an 'assistance dog' within their state (for example, South Australia), whereas other states have no local legislation and therefore the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* covers issues such as public access rights.

In South Australia, assistance dogs can be accredited under section 21A of the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*. Only a 'prescribed accreditation body' may accredit an 'assistance dog'

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[3] Note: SA Ambulance Service (SA Health) have developed *Accredited Support Dog Transport Procedure* (2016).

under the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*. Prescribed accreditation bodies in South Australia are the Dog and Cat Management Board, Assistance Dogs Australia, Guide Dogs SA (and all interstate chapters), Lions Hearing Dogs, Righteous Pups Australia, Royal Society for the Blind SA, and Vision Australia.

Types of assistance animals

Generally animals that meet the legal definition of an 'assistance animal' include:

- guide dogs for the blind or vision impaired
- hearing dogs for the deaf or hard of hearing
- autism assistance dogs (which mainly accompany children with an autistic disorder)
- animals that support mobility or other functional tasks
- animals that support episodic and serious medical crises (e.g. epilepsy, changes in blood pressure or blood sugar)
- animals that support people who experience mental health issues or disorders (e.g. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, anxiety, hallucinations, panic attacks or suicidal preoccupation).

A range of animals may be trained including dogs, miniature horses, pigs, parrots, reptiles, ferrets and monkeys. Currently in South Australia all accredited assistance animals are dogs. Other types of assistance animals are either absent or very uncommon and are found mainly overseas.

Occasionally, the terms 'service animals', 'disability dogs' or 'support dogs' are used. These fit under the umbrella of assistance animals.

Other support given by animals

Some animals may be used in therapeutic activities to improve a person's well-being and quality of life:

- 'Therapy' or 'facility' animals are used to facilitate counselling or psychotherapy and are often attached to a group facility (e.g. nursing home, counselling centre)
- 'Emotional support animals' are companion animals that provide emotional support to individuals at home.

These types of animals are not usually specifically task-trained to alleviate a disability and not appropriately trained for public access, therefore they generally do not meet the legal definition of

an assistance animal and do not have the same public access rights (see 'Public Access Rights' on page 9).

IDENTIFICATION

A person must not claim that an animal is an assistance animal unless it meets the definition of an assistance animal under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. Assistance animals may be identified through use of any of the following:

- an assistance animal identification card, pass, permit
- an assistance dog harness
- a coat, cape or vest clearly identifying them as an assistance animal
- an identification badge or medallion (displayed, for example, on its harness, collar, leash, coat, cape or vest).

Assistance animals may not be wearing any identifying equipment if they are at home or if the owner has relocated quickly in an emergency. If no equipment is visible, those requiring proof of identity can lawfully require a person to provide evidence that their animal is in fact an assistance animal.

Evidence that the animal is an assistance animal may include:

- assistance animal accreditation (for example, an identification card, pass, passbook, passport or permit) issued by a state or territory assistance animal training provider or
- a state or territory government-issued access card or transport pass or
- other evidence that shows the animal has been trained to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability and to meet the standards of hygiene and behaviour acceptable for a public place.

The following types of passes may be issued in South Australia:

- Assistance Dog Pass (under the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* (SA))
- Guide Dogs SA/NT Owner's Pass
- Guide Dogs SA/NT Puppy Raising Pass
- Lions Hearing Dog Pass
- Royal Society for the Blind (RSB) Guide Dog Owner Pass
- RSB Assistance Dog Owner Pass

- RSB Guide & Assistance Dog Training Pass.

Organisations can consider respectful ways to seek evidence of an animal's status that avoid asking for information about the person's disability. Two key questions that could be asked to establish the status of an animal and the service it provides are:

- Is the animal an accredited assistance animal?
- Do you have identification to show how it assists you?

The Dog and Cat Management Board (DCMB) can assist with verifying whether a dog is accredited under the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* (note: the DCMB does not hold records of other types of assistance animals)[4].

PUBLIC ACCESS RIGHTS

Legal basis

According to the Federal *Disability Discrimination Act 1992,* it is unlawful for a person to discriminate against another person on the ground of the other person's disability, including by refusing to allow the disabled person access to, or the use of, any premises or vehicle that the public is allowed to enter or use (whether for payment or not).

For some people, being separated from their assistance animal can have devastating, life-altering consequences. In recognition of this, under the Federal *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the South Australian *Equal Opportunity Act 1984,* animals that meet the definition of an 'assistance animal' have public access rights and may legally remain with their owner in most situations.

Animals that are appropriately trained should (under normal circumstances) respond to the owner's commands, be clean, toilet trained and not show aggression towards people. Most Australian states and territories require that a Public Access Test (PAT) be successfully completed as part of accreditation to ensure standards are met[5].

Emergency plans and procedures will ideally allow people to keep their assistance animal with them at all times or clearly outline exceptions where this is not possible.

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[4] For further information see www.dogandcatboard.com.au/accreditation-of-disability-dogs
[5] The Dog and Cat Management Board Public Access Test is described within www.dogandcatboard.com.au/policies (Accreditation of Disability Dogs)

Access exclusions

Assistance animals may be excluded from some areas or some situations, for example:

- where the public is not permitted
- where there is a public health risk e.g. intensive care and surgical units in hospitals and food preparation areas[6]
- animal sanctuaries such as zoos.

Carriage of assistance animals in aircraft may be restricted (Civil Aviation Regulations 1988 - regulation 256A). The regulation provides for the operator of an aircraft to permit a dog to be carried, in an aircraft cabin, providing the dog is assisting a person who is vision or hearing impaired. The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) may issue permission for the carriage of a dog assisting a person, who is other than vision or hearing impaired, on a case by case basis.[7]

An assistance animal may be excluded from any venue or vehicle if:

- the owner is unable to control the animal
- the animal is a direct threat to the ability of staff/workers to provide services to others
- there is demonstrable aggressive behaviour (although note that some assistance dogs are permitted to attract attention by barking)
- there is reasonable grounds to suspect that the assistance animal has an infectious disease and the exclusion is reasonably necessary to protect public health or the health of other animals.

Staff of venues and drivers of vehicles may benefit from having an established procedure for situations where a person may fail to produce the required evidence that their animal is accredited and/or suitably trained. Any refusal to allow entry or requests to a person to remove themselves and their animal from a venue/vehicle will ideally be documented by an appropriate person and, where applicable, any authorised officer lawfully exercising their power.

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[6] See www.dogandcatboard.com.au/accreditation-of-disability-dogs#faq_3
[7] More information - CASA website: www.casa.gov.au/standard-page/assistance-dogs-general-information-travellers

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Engagement programs and educational materials

Just like owners of pets and other animals, the people who rely on assistance animals will benefit from making personal plans for what they will do with themselves and their animal(s) in an emergency. Therefore, community engagement programs or educational materials that aid in personal emergency planning and preparation will be more inclusive if they prompt people who rely on an assistance animal to consider what risks they face and what specific needs might arise in relation to their animal, for example:

- If their assistance animal becomes confused or is separated from them, are there other ways they might be supported?
- If other people are giving assistance after an emergency, are instructions on how the animal is to be treated required?
- What evidence can be provided to show that the animal is appropriately trained to access public areas?

Planning resources

The following resources may help people who utilise assistance animals to plan for emergencies:

- RSPCA SA 'Pets in Emergencies' (www.rspcasa.org.au/the-issues/animals-in-emergencies/)
- Red Cross Training Services (2009) *Emergency Rediplan: Household Preparedness for People with a Disability, their Families and Carers*. Australian Red Cross.
- Australian Red Cross – RediPlan: Your Emergency Plan (www.redcross.org.au/prepare)

Note that the above references are accessible through www.sa.gov.au/emergencies

RESPONSE, RELIEF AND RECOVERY

Operational considerations

The following key principles provide guidance when planning for people with assistance animals in emergencies:

- The psychological and physical health and wellbeing of the person may be highly dependent on their assistance animal. This will be exacerbated in stressful situations

such as emergencies. Unless the safety of the owner is compromised by staying with their assistance animal, it is important to consider all means whereby an assistance animal can remain with its owner, even if this means providing a separate space as an option for the owner to consider (e.g. if other members of the public claim to be allergic, afraid of or phobic about the animal)

- Where an assistance animal is allowed entry to a public venue or transport vehicle the organisation responsible may wish to consider:
  - o the circumstances in which staff should request that the person seeking entry keep the animal under control of that person or another person on behalf of that person
  - o whether a form of identification issued by the organisation is required to alert other staff that the assistance animal has been approved to enter the venue/vehicle.

- Under major disruptive conditions it is important to consider the level of stress and confusion a person and/or their assistance animal may be under. Where possible, providing a designated support person and a quiet place to regain composure may be vital in ensuring the health and wellbeing of the person and their animal. The designated person could assist with:
  - o physical and psychological support and safety of the person and assistance animal (e.g. orientation at a venue)
  - o toilet assistance for the person and/or the assistance animal
  - o obtaining veterinary aid, water and food if required
  - o any other matters that support the person and their assistance animal.

- Some assistance animals are trained with behaviours that function to alert their owner of oncoming medical episodes or issues that need the owner's attention - these behaviours may appear unusual in an ordinary animal but are part of the service offered by the assistance animal. To assist with possible oncoming medical episodes, the responder could check the owner for information (e.g. on a medic alert)

- Assistance animals perform their services most effectively if they are not purposefully distracted or petted by strangers, so it is helpful to remind others to refrain from interacting with the animal unless the owner has given permission.

Emergency care for assistance dogs

If the owner is incapacitated, placement of the assistance animal with a caretaker may be required - assistance dog owners may carry material in their purses, wallets or dog's backpacks or pouches with contact information in case of an emergency, or an emergency contact number may be engraved onto a medallion (Figure 1).

Most organisations that provide assistance dogs in South Australia have access to emergency boarding facilities, e.g. within their volunteer workforce. If an assistance dog is found wandering without an owner, an option is to contact the emergency number provided with the dog's identification (if present) or call an assistance dog organisation for advice on temporary accommodation.

Figure 1: Example of a medallion showing a dog identification number and emergency contact number (Photo: RSB)

Assistance dogs are usually microchipped, which will aid identification if they become separated from the owner and other forms of identification are absent.

South Australian Veterinary Emergency Management Inc. (SAVEM) may be able to provide microchip identification services and veterinary assistance if normal veterinary services are unavailable after an emergency incident[8].

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[8] Activated in emergencies through Primary Industries and Regions SA - Agriculture and Animal Services

Library & Resources

Other resources   ⌄

Animals & natural disasters

Veterinary hospitals, like all animal businesses, also need to make sure they also have a plan for the animals in their care in the event of an emergency.

The Australian Veterinary Association helps organisations responding to an emergency to access volunteer veterinarians and other veterinary staff. We also have online resources for veterinarians on treating animals injured in natural disasters, and downloadable posters for your practice to help clients remember the importance of preparing for an emergency.

Resources to assist during a bushfire emergency

Webinar

1:24:24

Articles

- Journal article on horse burns made available as Australian fires rage
- Findings and strategies for treating horses injured in open range fires
- Get Ready Animals

Wildlife

- Treatment of burnt wildlife

- Treating burnt wildlife

- Equipment used for burnt wildlife

- Wldlife Health Australia including information on Novel Coronavirus

Dogs and cats

- Treatment of burnt cats of dogs

Livestock

- Agriculture Victoria: Assessing cattle after a bushfire

- Agriculture Victoria: Assessing sheep after a bushfire

- Agriculture Victoria: Horses affected by bushfires

- Agriculture Victoria: Introduction to fires

- Agriculture Victoria: Disposing of carcasses after bushfire, flood or drought

- New South Wales DPI: Assessing bushfire burns in livestock

- Tasmania DPI: Livestock and domestic animal welfare during bushfires

- Meat & Livestock Australia: Preparing for bushfire season

- Assessment of cattle burnt in bushfires

- Alpaca bushfire care

- Veterinary responses to livestock after a bushfire

- Management of burn injuries in the horse

- Lessons learned from an Australian bushfire with voiceover

Emergency response

- Working with fire agencies at bushfires - protocols for volunteers involved in wildlife rescue operations

- Response to bushfires: NSW perspective

- Queensland Government: Preparing animals for natural disasters

Disaster assistance

National disaster assistance schemes

Downloadable Practice Flyers

Keeping your horse safe in a natural disaster (2 MB)

Keeping your livestock safe in emergencies (958 kB)

Contact the AVA

Need assistance or have an enquiry? We're here to help.

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Pets in emergencies

Plan ahead and be prepared.

How to keep your animals safe during emergencies and disasters

Just as we need to prepare our family and property in times of emergencies and natural disasters we also need to prepare our animals.

After human safety, the welfare of your animals should be your most important consideration in the event of a natural disaster. It is up to you to plan ahead and be prepared before an emergency happens to ensure the safety of yourself and your pets.

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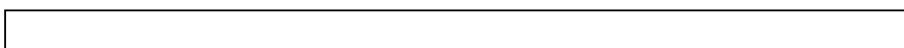
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Know the risks in your area and plan ahead

In South Australia, natural disasters that may occur are bushfires, extreme weather (storms, floods, heatwaves) and earthquakes. You should investigate and understand the risks both in your area and in places where your animals may occasionally stay.

By planning ahead and acting early, you can avoid danger, panic and potentially fatal situations. Although individual needs will vary, the information on this page will help you to plan for the safety of yourself and your pets in emergencies.

This information is applicable to most household pets and assistance animals. For larger animals such as horses or livestock, more information can be found at Horse SA's My Horse Disaster Plan and Primary Industries and Regions SA's Animal Safety in Emergencies webpage.

The Pet Emergency Plan initiative is funded by the Natural Disaster Resilience Program, and has been developed by RSPCA South Australia in partnership with the Commonwealth and State Government of South Australia. The initiative is designed to ensure that South Australian pet owners are well prepared to protect themselves and their pets in emergencies.

3 essential steps to creating your Pet Emergency Plan

Step 1: Include pets in your emergency survival plan ⌄

Step 2: Prepare your Pet Emergency Kit ⌄

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Activating your Pet Emergency Plan

You need to decide what will trigger you to activate your plan and when this may involve relocating your pets.

To avoid unnecessary risks to you and your pets, move them to a safe place when emergency conditions are forecast (for example: catastrophic fire risk declared for next day or a flood watch warning issued). Spending a short time away is better than taking the risk of being caught out or trapped by rapidly changing life-threatening conditions.

You may also need to relocate in response to a warning about an emergency event in your area (for example: Watch and Act warning issued for fire event).

If relocating, consider the following:

- Small pets should be contained within the home at the first sign of an emergency. This ensures they are close at hand if you make the decision to evacuate.
- Phone ahead to confirm arrangements with the safe location you have designated in your emergency plan.
- Pack your Pet Emergency Kit in your vehicle.

- Carry birds, rabbits, guinea pigs, mice or other pocket pets in cages or in secure boxes with small air holes.
- Put fish in a large wide-necked jar with a secure lid. Fill the jar two-thirds with water. Regularly blow through a straw into the water to aerate it.
- [covered tub] with 5cm of water and air holes in the top.
- [Use] a container with a secure lid and air holes. They may also be transported in a sack or pillowcase that has been securely fastened at the opening.
- As poultry and aviary birds are easily affected by smoke, place a hessian covering over the cage. If so, wet down the covering and secure around the outside of the cage.

Managing your pets in place during emergencies

Pets should not be abandoned unless it is impossible to safely evacuate them. If a disaster strikes without warning it may be too late to leave safely – you and your pets may need to shelter in place.

If you cannot evacuate or are forced to leave your pets behind, be sure to follow this advice:

- Provide food and water for at least one week in accessible places and in more than one container that can't be tipped over.
- Ensure pets are easily identified (for example a collar with a name and phone number and up to date microchip details).
- [Put a sign on the] front door or on your mail box stating your mobile phone number, how many pets are [inside the house], their species, names and a photo.
- Birds will require food dispensers that supply a large amount of food. Consider using a timer. (None of these dispensers will be provided for all pets.
- In the case of flood, position a heavy chair or crate to allow access to a higher refuge such as a bench, vanity unit or shelf where adequate food and water should be left.
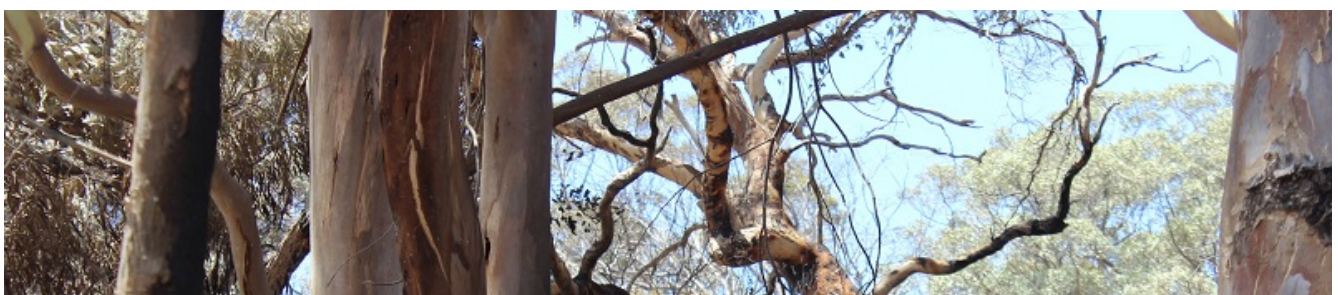
If possible, leave your pets indoors:

- If you are home, shut your pets inside the house so they are close by and can exit with you once the danger has passed.
- If you have to leave pets behind alone, leave your pets in a safe, secure room. Ideally this room would have no windows, and must have adequate air (for exampe: a big bathroom).
- Avoid rooms with hazards such as large windows, hanging plants or large picture frames.
- Don't confine dogs and cats in the same space.

If you have to leave your pets outside:

- Ensure there is plenty of water available from a source that does not rely on power or above-ground pipes.
- In a bushfire, move pets to a closely grazed or ploughed paddock (preferably around the homestead) with drinking water, steel fencing and preferably shade. (Poultry can be placed in a temporary pen.)
- In a flood, move pets to high ground with adequate natural feed. Additional feed may be required for stock stranded for extended periods.
- In a severe storm (including hail) or a cyclone, place pets under solid cover (for example: a sturdy barn / shed or covered pen).
- Do not shut horses in stables or small fenced yards. Sand arenas, grazed down paddocks or similar bare areas are best.
- High visibility pet coats and horse rugs with your mobile phone number can also be helpful to assist in the relocation of lost pets – but horse rugs, halters, fly veils, etc, are best removed during floods or fires, as they may become caught on objects or melt onto skin during intense heat.
- Do not place synthetic blankets on your horses, as these may melt during extreme heat.
- Provide a minimum of five days' supply of hay or ensure access to pasture.

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Specific hazard information: thunderstorms, heat waves, bushfires and earthquakes

Earthquakes ⌄

Bushfires ⌄

Extreme heat waves ⌄

Thunderstorms ⌄

After an emergency: relief and recovery

In the event that your pet does become lost during an emergency, please click here to search for found animals in RSPCA South Australia's shelters, and for more information on finding your lost pet.

After an emergency, you may need to:

- Check your pets for any injuries and seek medical attention if required.
- Survey your property for hazards such as sharp objects, dangerous materials, live wires and contaminated water.
- Check fences and enclosures – find safe and secure areas to release animals into (during daylight) or find other temporary accommodation/agistment.
- Watch your pets closely for the first few hours – often familiar areas and scents have changed which can confuse your animals and alter their behaviour.
- Seek emergency food and water if supplies are damaged.
- If your pets have been without food for a long period, reintroduce food slowly and in small portions.
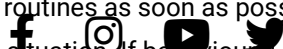
- Allow uninterrupted rest to recover from trauma or stress. Be patient with your pets after a disaster. Try to get them back into their normal routines as soon as possible, and be ready for behavioural problems that may result from the stress of the situation. If behavioural problems persist, or if your animals seem to be having a health problem, talk to your vet.

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- relocated, roads may be closed for some time and you may not be able to return to your property until the area is deemed safe.

Support for animal welfare after disasters and emergencies

After a major emergency or natural disaster, normal services may be disrupted or overwhelmed and Primary Industries and Regions SA may activate 'Agricultural and Animal Services' (AAS).

- AAS provides relief support for emergency-affected animals through a range of organisations, including RSPCA South Australia.
- Full information about AAS services and other emergency arrangements that support animals can be found here.

At the time of a major emergency, updates about who to contact for animal assistance will appear on the PIRSA

A relief or recovery centre may be set up by Department of Communities and Social Inclusion to provide relief or recovery services to people affected by the emergency. Assistance animals are permitted inside but, due to health and safety, other animals must remain outside. Pet owners are responsible for the welfare of their pets at animals at relief centres may be organised through AAS if required.

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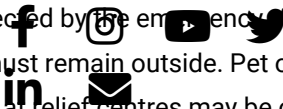
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Further information to support your planning process

For more help and advice, please visit the following links:

- SA Government – Emergencies and safety
- Country Fire Service (CFS) – Prepare for a fire (general information)
- Country Fire Service (CFS) – Prepare pets and livestock for a fire
- Bureau of Meteorology – SA Weather and Warnings
- Horse SA – Emergency
- Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) – Livestock and other animal safety during and after emergencies
- State Emergency Management Plan – Guidelines for Planning for People with Assistance Animals In Emergencies

Connect with us:

As you can see, with a little planning and foresight, you can be fully prepared before an emergency happens to ensure the safety of yourself and your beloved pets.

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🏠   GPO Box 2122 , Adelaide 5001

📱   1300 4 777 22

✉   info@rspcasa.org.au

RSPCA Knowledgebase

What should I consider if I need to evacuate my animal in a natural disaster?

During a natural disaster such as a bushfire, extreme weather (storms, floods, heatwaves) or earthquake, it may be necessary to evacuate from your home. It is important to have an emergency plan in place which includes your animals.

What should I do to prepare for an emergency?

1. Sign up for alerts from your local emergency agency
2. Work out where you could evacuate your pet
3. Create a 3-step Pet Emergency Plan
4. Share this information with friends and family who also have pets

1. Sign up for alerts from your local emergency agency

You need the most relevant and up-to-date emergency and natural disaster information for your area and your circumstances in order to stay safe. Sign up to alerts, follow emergency services on Twitter or Facebook, check emergency services' websites for updated information or call your local emergency hotline (such as those listed in the table below). Local emergency services will be able to guide you on if/when to evacuate and how to keep your animal safe in that scenario.

State/Territory	

State/Territory	
South Australia	CFS Bushfire information hotline: 1800 362 361 PIRSA Agriculture and Animal Services Hotline: 1800 255 556 ABC Local Radio @csfalerts and @cfstalk on Twitter SA Country Fire Service's Facebook page Alert SA Mobile App CFS website (lists/links to other sources of information also)
Western Australia	DFES Hotline: 13 3337 SES Hotline: 132 500 ABC Local Radio @dfes_wa on Twitter Department of Fire and Emergency Services WA Facebook page
Northern Territory	Fire Assistance Hotline: 08 8999 3473 NT SES Hotline: 132 500 SecureNT list of shelters Bushfires NT Facebook Page
Queensland	QLD SES Hotline: 132 500 Local Disaster Coordination Centre Hotline: 1300 362 242 @QldFES on Twitter QFES Facebook Page Queensland Disaster Management website (lists/links to other sources of information also) LDCC website

State/Territory	
New South Wales	Agriculture and Animal Services hotline: 1800 814 647 NSW SES Hotline: 132 500 @NSWRFS on Twitter QFES newsfeed NSW Disaster Recovery's Facebook Page NSW Emergency website (lists/links to other sources of information also)
Victoria	VicEmergency Hotline: 1800 226 226 Victorian emergency animal welfare corner hotline: 136 186 VIC SES Hotline: 132 500 ABC local radio @CFA_Updates on Twitter VicEmergency app
Australian Capital Territory	ACTESA Hotline: 132 500 666 ABC Canberra on the radio @ACT_ESA on Twitter ACTESA's Facebook Page
Tasmania	TasALERT's Facebook Page ABC Local Radio TasALERT website (lists/links to other sources of information also) TFS website (lists/links to other sources of information also)

Table 1: Emergency information
(Note that these were accurate at the time of publishing of this article but that these may change at any time without notice. Please seek advice from your local authority for up-to-date information specific to your circumstances.)

In a life-threatening emergency, call 000 (landline) or 112 (mobile) immediately.

2. Work out where you could evacuate your pet

Finding a safe place for your animal can be challenging, especially for horses and farmed animals. Before an emergency happens, take time to investigate potential places as part of your emergency or bushfire plan. This will help to avoid a delay in evacuating your home and keep all of your family safe. To avoid unnecessary risks to you and your pets, move them to a safe place when emergency conditions are forecast (for example, when catastrophic fire risk is declared for the next day or a severe flood watch warning is issued). Spending a short time away is better than taking the risk of being caught out or trapped by rapidly-changing, life-threatening conditions. And it provides an opportunity for you to practice your plan.

Potential evacuation sites

There are many options for relocating you and your animals in the case of an evacuation. Make sure you know these options and include your first preference as well as alternatives in your evacuation plan. You may not be able to relocate to your first preference due to the natural disaster warning or fire spreading to an area that was previously safe, roads being closed or blocked or, in the case of friends and family, changing personal circumstances affecting their ability to accommodate you. The best option for you and your animal(s) depends on where you are and what type of animal(s) you have.

Options include:

1. Homes of friends or family outside of the risk area;

2. Boarding facilities in a safe area;

3. Animal care centres such as the RSPCA or local council pounds, if they are out of the risk area and able to adequately care for evacuated animals;

4. Pet-friendly evacuation centres set up by emergency department officials; and

5. For horses and farmed animals, safe agistment sites, showgrounds and saleyards that may be set up by local emergency department officials.

Pet-friendly evacuation centres

Evacuation Centres (ECs) are temporary sites set up by the local emergency agency to house people, and often their animals, in tents and repurposed buildings such as schools and stadiums. ECs may also provide emergency supplies and information and may help reunite you with other family members [1]. ECs should be your last resort, as these facilities place significant stress on local authorities' resources that could be used for more vulnerable people if you have other viable

options [2]. Whether evacuation centres allow animals on site varies. In general, South Australia, Western Australia, Northern Territory and Queensland either have limited options in ECs for animals or do not allow animals in ECs [3,4].

Several pet-friendly ECs have been pre-organised, as below. Note that these were accurate at the time of publishing of this article but that these may change at any time without notice. Please seek advice from your local authority (see Table 1 above) for up-to-date information specific to your circumstances.

State/Territory	
South Australia	Human relief centres may organise support for companion animals during an emergency. Call the AAS Hotline (1800 255 556) for assistance. If you need shelter for your animal(s), you can register at the relief centre for temporary accommodation.
Western Australia	Mobile Animal Welfare Response Trailers are sometimes set up adjacent to certain evacuation centres during an emergency (for example, those that have been set up at places such as Cannington Leisureplex, Riverton Leisureplex, Bentley Community Hall or Lynwood Wandarah Hall) Call the WA SES Hotline to confirm the location of these: 132 500
Northern Territory	Carpark shelters (sheltered carparks in which you can keep your pet restrained in the car) Call the NT SES Hotline for suitable animal housing close to evacuation centres: 132 500
Queensland	Call the LDCC Hotline for suitable animal housing close to evacuation centres: 1300 362 242

State/Territory	
New South Wales	All human evacuation centres are usually able accommodate companion animals DPI list of animal safe places, including for livestock The NSW government website lists bush fire evacuation centres that allow animals, including domestic pets and livestock For emergency fodder or stock water, animal assessment or veterinary services, call the Agricultural and Animal Services Hotline on 1800 814 647 or you can send a direct message to the NSW DPI Facebook Page NSW Rural Fire Service NSW Farmers National Farmers' Federation South East Local Land Services Riverina Local Land Services
Victoria	Most human relief centres in the local councils can accommodate small animals Livestock may be housed in local saleyards or showgrounds; for example, the East Gippsland Livestock Exchange
Australian Capital Territory	All human evacuation centres should be able to accommodate small animals Horses may be housed in local stables or showgrounds; for example, the EPIC stables and Queanbeyan Showground
Tasmania	All human evacuation centres should be able to accommodate small animals

Table 2: Pet-friendly evacuation centres or information

3. Create a 3-Step Pet Emergency Plan

Research shows that having a clear, written plan in the case of an emergency saves lives [5]. Follow this simple guide to create your own written emergency plan that includes your pet:

1. Include your pet(s) in your emergency survival plan

This includes ensuring your pet is trained to use a leash or be in a carrier/crate, and is comfortable being in public spaces or being transported. Make sure your pet is registered

and microchipped, and that the microchip details are up-to-date. Identify the specific circumstances that will trigger you to consider evacuating you and your pet.

2. Prepare your Pet Emergency Kit

This includes all the supplies that you and your pet will need for a short stay away and that will help you get temporary accommodation for them. This includes food, medication, litter/litter trays or poo bags, registration and vaccination certificates, veterinary history, proof of ownership and emergency contact numbers.

3. Practice your survival plan

Set time aside to practice your plan to make sure you are familiar with it in an emergency.

For small animals, you can follow RSPCA South Australia's detailed guide to create your plan today. For horses, you can follow the My Horse Disaster Plan guide.

4. Share this information with friends and family who also have pets

Not everyone will have had the time or opportunity to start preparing early for an emergency, so make sure you share this page and relevant emergency contacts with friends and family.

A little planning goes a long way

There is a lot to consider in the case of an emergency or natural disaster. Make sure you are prepared well in advance so you can keep your pet safe in any circumstances.

References

[1]: SEMC Evacuations Working Group (June 2014) Major Evacuation Centre Guideline (accessed 13 Jan 2020)

[2]: Emergency Services Agency (n.d.) Emergency Grab and Go Booklet (accessed 15 Jan 2020)

[3]: Primary Industries & Regions SA (28 June 2018) Managing Animals in Emergencies

[4]: SecureNT (2020) Emergency Shelters (accessed 14 Jan 2020)

[5]: Victoria State Emergency Service (2020) Emergency Plans and Kits (accessed 20 Jan 2020

Also Read

📄 [Emergency preparedness for farm animals](#)

📄 [How can I be a responsible cat owner?](#)

📄 [How can I minimise the impact of bushfire smoke on my animals?](#)

📄 [What can we do to help livestock that have been burnt by a fire?](#)

📄 [What preparations should I make for my pets in case of an emergency?](#)

Updated on May 10, 2021

Home > Companion Animals > Cats > Caring for my Cat
Home > Companion Animals > Dogs > Caring for my Dog
Home > Companion Animals > Pet Ownership
Home > Companion Animals > Cats > Cat Management

https://kb.rspca.org.au/knowledge-base/what-should-i-consider-if-i-need-to-evacuate-my-animal-in-a-natural-disaster/

Tagged: Bushfires   Climate change   Emergencies   Horse care

PRIMARY
INDUSTRIES
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PIRSA

Managing Animals in Emergencies

A FRAMEWORK FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA

28 JUNE 2018

DISASTER
RESILIENT
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Government
of South Australia

Primary Industries
and Regions SA

Managing Animals in Emergencies: A Framework for South Australia

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Authority		
Agriculture and Animal Services State Controller in accordance with the State Emergency Management Plan		
Issuing Agency		
Primary Industries and Regions SA		
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Version	**Revision Description**	**Date**
Version 1.0	Review at multi-agency Discussion Exercise	11 August 2016
Version 1.1	Project Steering Committee	5 October 2016
Version 1.2	SA NDSR Implementation Steering Group	1 November 2016
Version 1.3	State Emergency Management Committee	14 November 2016
Version 2.0	Revisions from public consultation; reformatting	25 January 2017
Version 2.1	PIRSA review and update; review at multi-agency Discussion Exercise	18 April 2018
Version 2.2	Project Steering Committee	25 May 2018
Version 2.3	State Mitigation Advisory Group, State Response Advisory Group	6 June 2018
Version 3.0	State Emergency Management Committee	17 July 2018
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PIRSA staff, PIRSA AAS participating agencies, emergency management agencies, industry bodies, public		
Classifications:		
Confidentiality	Public	
Integrity	[I2] Integrity 2	MODERATE requirement meaning that the Agency would be somewhat affected by a loss of integrity however the situation could be easily detected and recovered.
Availability	[A1] Availability 1	LOW requirement meaning that loss of the data would have only a minor impact on the business for an extended period (ie: best-effort recovery).
State Records Act Requirements:	Permanent Retention.	
Approval:			
Name	**Title**	**Signature**	**Date**
Elena Petrenas	Manager, Emergency Mgt, Biosecurity SA		28 June 2018

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(08) 8429 0864
www.pir.sa.gov.au

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ACRONYMS

Acronym	Organisation
AAS	Agriculture and Animal Services
AVA	Australian Veterinary Association
AWL	Animal Welfare League
CFS	Country Fire Service
DEW	Department for Environment and Water
DHS	Department for Human Services
DPTI	Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure
DSD	Department of State Development
EPA	Environment Protection Authority
LGA	Local Government Association of South Australia
MFS	Metropolitan Fire Service
PIRSA	Primary Industries and Regions South Australia
PPSA	Primary Producers South Australia
RSPCA SA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (South Australia)
SAFECOM	South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission
SAPOL	South Australia Police
SAVEM	South Australian Veterinary Emergency Management Inc.
SEMC	State Emergency Management Committee
SEMP	State Emergency Management Plan
SES	State Emergency Service

FOREWORD

South Australia's emergency management arrangements involve State agencies, Local Councils, non-government organisations, businesses, industry groups and the community. Emergency management is a range of measures to manage risks to communities and the environment. It involves the development and maintenance of arrangements to prevent or mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters.

It is recognised nationally that the ability to bounce back after an emergency event (individual or community 'disaster resilience') requires people to work together.

Past emergency events have shown that improving the capacity to plan ahead and manage animals in emergencies is important to reduce last-minute risk-taking behavior, improve animal welfare outcomes and aid in recovery after emergency events.

The purpose of this document is to provide guiding principles and policies to support planning for the management of animals in emergencies at all levels in South Australia. It also explains the current arrangements to support animal welfare in emergencies, including the roles and responsibilities of animal owners, government agencies and supporting non-government organisations.

Under the State Emergency Management Plan, Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) is the lead agency responsible for the coordination of official animal relief support services during major emergencies. PIRSA has developed this framework in conjunction with relevant emergency management agencies, non-government organisations, industry groups and community members in accordance with the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience Community Engagement Framework[1].

The framework to manage animals in emergencies was developed as a result of a State Strategic Project under the SA Natural Disaster Resilience Program and is endorsed by the State Emergency Management Committee. We commend the use of this framework to people responsible for the care and management of animals as well as State agencies, local councils, non-government organisations, researchers, businesses and industry groups who have a role in building overall community resilience in the face of emergencies.

Will Zacharin

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BIOSECURITY SA

PIRSA

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[1] Emergency Management Australia (2013) *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience Community Engagement Framework*. Handbook 6 Australian Emergency Management Handbook Series. Australian Emergency Management Institute, Attorney-General's Department, Commonwealth of Australia.

INTRODUCTION

Many animals in South Australia including pets, assistance animals, livestock and wildlife are at risk of separation from their owners, injury or death due to major emergencies such as fires, floods, extreme weather, spills of hazardous materials and transport accidents. In the period 2015-2018 alone, major rural fires in South Australia resulted in over 75 200 known animal deaths. Less frequent but potentially devastating events such as earthquakes and oil spills could also have major impacts on animal welfare.

The bonds we have with animals are strong and complex: pets and assistance animals contribute to many people's health and well-being; livestock are a cornerstone of primary production and native animals are an integral part of our environment that help give us our sense of place and spirit of what is South Australia. The loss, injury or death of animals is not only a tragedy in itself, but can have a lasting impact on people's emotional and financial ability to recover after an emergency event.

Experience and research nationally and internationally shows that incorporating considerations of animal management and animal welfare into emergency plans not only significantly improves animal welfare outcomes but also the ability of the community to recover from emergencies.

Last-minute decision making during emergencies puts lives at risk. Animal owners and managers must take responsibility to ensure they are well-prepared to manage their animals appropriately in emergencies, to not only improve the prospects for their animals but also their own safety and that of the community at large.

The *National Planning Principles for Animals in Disasters*[2] states that 'failure to account for animals in emergencies puts human lives at risk' and that 'in order to build community resilience, animals must be integrated into emergency management planning'. The national planning principles were endorsed by the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee in 2014 and these provide the foundation for the South Australian framework for managing animals in emergencies.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to support animal owners, the community at large, government agencies, non-government organisations and businesses to understand their role and responsibilities towards managing animal welfare before, during and after emergencies.

It aims to show animal owners the key issues they should understand in order to build their ability to plan and act for the survival and recovery of the animals for which they are responsible whilst upholding the safety of themselves, the community and others who respond to emergencies. It also shows the range of animal issues that agencies and organisations involved in emergency management should consider in their planning, communications and training.

Each agency and organisation that contributes to emergency management should have its own plan detailing responsibilities and operating procedures. This framework does not replace agency plans and procedures, rather it aims to give an overview of the principles and issues that should be considered in planning by those dealing with animals and animal owners.

Scope

Animals that are relevant to the principles and arrangements outlined in this document include:

- companion animals (pets)

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[2] National Advisory Committee for Animals in Emergencies (2014) *National Planning Principles for Animals in Disasters.* AAWS and World Animal Protection.

- livestock/production animals
- assistance animals (e.g. guide dogs, hearing dogs, etc.)
- animals in the wild, including aquatic animals (other than fish)
- animals used for work, sport, recreation, display, research and teaching.

In South Australia, emergencies that have the potential to impact on these animals and the broader community include rural and urban fires, floods, extreme weather, earthquake, escape of hazardous materials, oil spills, transport accidents and emergency animal disease incursions.

The principles and arrangements outlined in this document apply to all of these emergency types with the exclusion of emergency animal disease incursions. In South Australia, emergency animal disease incursions are managed under response arrangements outlined in PIRSA's Animal and Plant Disease Hazard Plan and the national AUSVETPLAN.

Photo: Eric Isselee/Shutterstock

AUTHORITY AND GOVERNANCE

In South Australia, emergencies are managed under the *Emergency Management Act 2004.* In accordance with this Act, detailed responsibilities and broad operational arrangements are outlined in the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP). This framework is a component of the SEMP under Part 3: Supporting Guidelines and Frameworks.

Under the SEMP there are various sub-plans that outline how each type of emergency hazard is dealt with (at state and regional levels). Also as part of the SEMP arrangements, PIRSA Agriculture and Animal Services (PIRSA AAS) provides immediate animal relief services.

All principles and management arrangements in this document follow the laws and official plans that guide emergency management and the welfare of animals in South Australia. Beyond the *Emergency Management Act 2004*, the framework is consistent with the:

- *Animal Welfare Act 1985*
- *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*
- *Impounding Act 1920* (which describes how stray livestock may be managed)
- *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* (conservation and protection of native animals)
- *Natural Resources Management Act 2004* (e.g. control of pest animals).

Council by-laws may also describe local laws relevant to animal management established by Councils to deal with specific issues relevant to their area (e.g. local cat management or the keeping of backyard poultry).

Codes of practice exist that also promote the welfare of animals, including provisions for animal owners to develop plans for emergency situations. Animal welfare codes of practice relevant to South Australia are listed on the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) website[3].

It is acknowledged that emergency situations can impact the ability to uphold optimal animal welfare standards. However it is important that animal owners consider likely hazards and plan in advance to take the most appropriate course of action to minimise the impact on their animals' wellbeing without compromising human safety.

Who is responsible for this document?

PIRSA developed this document on behalf of the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) and is responsible for its review. This is consistent with PIRSA's role as the lead agency responsible for coordinating official services that support agriculture and animals during and after emergencies.

The development of this document involved representatives of affected parties including the community, other agencies, local government, animal welfare organisations, relevant industry groups and wildlife carers.

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[3] www.environment.sa.gov.au/managing-natural-resources/Plants_Animals/Animal_welfare/Codes_of_practice

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Vision

South Australians sharing responsibility to improve the safety, survival and humane treatment of animals in emergencies.

Aim

The primary aim of emergency response is to protect the safety of people. In order to fulfil this aim, the following factors regarding animals must be taken into account:

- Research proves that the bonds people have with animals will influence their decision-making and behaviour during an emergency (for example, failing to relocate to a safer place if they cannot take their pets with them).
- People will often put themselves at risk for animals in emergencies even if those animals are not their own. This risk-taking can lead to dangerous or fatal consequences.

The overarching aim of this framework is to address animal issues in emergencies in order to:

- protect and improve the welfare of animals in emergencies
- improve the safety of people by reducing last-minute decision making and risk-taking behavior related to animals
- improve the wellbeing and recovery of people after an emergency by ensuring the needs of animals are met where possible.

Goals

The individual goals to achieve the overarching aim are to ensure that:

1. Emergency management plans include actions for the safe and humane management of animals.

2. The public is kept informed and provided with timely, relevant animal information at all stages of an emergency.

3. The welfare of animals directly impacted by an emergency is addressed.

4. Deceased animals are disposed of promptly in an environmentally safe manner.

5. The temporary sheltering of animals is supported.

6. People are reunited with their animals as soon as it is safe to do so.

7. Volunteers and donated resources are managed to support animals as required.

8. Land and ecosystems are rehabilitated to support livestock and wildlife.

The following section outlines overarching guiding principles for policy and planning, followed by information summarising how each of the above goals is currently addressed.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The *National Planning Principles for Animals in Disasters* and the *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience*[4] provide key principles that guide emergency planning at all levels. In developing policies and plans for managing animals in emergencies in South Australia, the following principles from these documents should be used as a guide:

- The safety and welfare of people is the overarching priority at all times.
- The responsibility for the welfare of an animal at all times remains with the person in lawful charge of that animal.
- Government and non-government organisations can play a supporting role in helping people exercise their responsibilities for animals – arrangements between organisations should be formalised to enable coordination and to achieve clarity around responsibilities.
- The management of all animals should be considered in emergency planning processes where relevant:
  - companion animals/pets
  - livestock
  - animals in the wild
  - assistance animals
  - animals used for work, sport, recreation or display
  - animals used in research and teaching.
- Animals and their owners can be affected by many types of emergencies and hence emergency plans need to consider all relevant hazards and risks.
- Biosecurity arrangements to prevent spread of pests and disease are extremely important and quarantine and biosecurity protocols must be upheld wherever practicable.
- Any activity specified in plans of government agencies or partnering organisations must be consistent with the *Emergency Management Act 2004* and the State Emergency Management Plan.

Photo: apple2499/Shutterstock

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[4] Council of Australian Governments (2011) *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience*. Commonwealth of Australia, ACT.

GOALS

Goal 1: Emergency management plans include actions for the safe and humane management of animals

Animal owners and managers are responsible for:	Government agencies are responsible for:
• understanding the types of emergencies and the level of risk to which animals could be exposed in the area where they are located • adequately insuring animals and assets according to risk • planning how animals will be managed should emergency conditions be forecast or if an emergency event occurs • practising plans for animals, especially if the intention is to relocate them to a safer place (note that the behaviour of animals may become erratic in emergency conditions) • preparing animals by updating registration, identification and vaccinations • including carcass disposal considerations in emergency plans for livestock or in situations where large numbers of animals are kept • discussing plans with neighbours, friends, family, staff or assistance providers so that these people know whether or not support may be needed to manage animals	• addressing animal management in emergency plans where relevant • recognising that assistance animals have public access rights which should be accounted for in emergency plans and procedures[5] • fostering community awareness of relevant hazards and how to plan for the management of animals during and after emergencies • providing targeted and up-to-date information relevant to planning for animals in emergencies on www.sa.gov.au/emergencies (the central source for South Australian Government emergency information)

Key messages

- Plans should acknowledge that the responsibility for the welfare of an animal at all times remains with the person in charge of that animal. Government agencies and other organisations have a supporting role to assist those in charge of animals to uphold their responsibilities.
- Integrating animal considerations into emergency plans will improve not only the welfare outcomes for animals but also the safety and resilience of people in charge of animals and the community at large.
- The safety of people is the first priority. Accordingly, animal owners should act in a manner that ensures their own safety, that of emergency responders and the community. Animal owners should not expect others to risk their lives by entering a dangerous area to manage or relocate animals.
- If animal owners decide to leave animals on their property during an emergency, others need to respect that decision and not remove them unless the owner gives permission to do so.

Supporting arrangements

A range of agencies and non-government organisations provide animal-specific emergency planning information. Key sources are listed in Appendix 1.

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[5] PIRSA (2018) *Guidelines for Planning for People with Assistance Animals in Emergencies*. Government of South Australia. In State Emergency Management Plan Part 3: Supporting Guidelines and Frameworks.

Goal 2: The public is kept informed and provided with timely, relevant animal information at all stages of emergencies

Animal owners and managers are responsible for:	Government agencies are responsible for:
• familiarising themselves with standard emergency warnings • understanding which warnings are triggers for implementing emergency plans • understanding where to find reliable emergency information during an event	• providing emergency information (including the meaning of alerts and warnings) at www.sa.gov.au/emergencies • issuing advice or information that relates to animal issues through appropriate agencies • conveying animal information in formats that are accessible to all South Australians, including those at greater risk[6]

Key messages

Prior to an emergency, animal owners and managers can be assisted by providing information about how to plan and prepare for managing animals in emergencies (refer to 'Supporting arrangements').

During an emergency, the public may be assisted by messages about:

- relocation options for displaced people with animals (where to go, if known)
- the general status of animals within an emergency affected area (if known)
- who is providing official animal relief services (where located and/or who to contact)
- how they can best assist in animal relief and recovery
- the status of road closures and when people are allowed to enter based on animal welfare needs

To improve safety, messages should reinforce the principle that people concerned about the welfare of animals should not risk their lives or that of others by entering unsafe areas (e.g. where road closures are in place) unless they are authorised to do so.

After an emergency, public information can include what recovery assistance is available to support animal needs and how people can best assist in longer-term recovery (see Goals 7 and 8).

Supporting arrangements

Sources of comprehensive emergency planning information for different types of animals is given in Appendix 1.

During emergencies, official public messages are authorised by the 'Control Agency'[7] (Table 1). A range of other organisations may contribute to, reiterate or forward these messages.

After emergencies, Department of Human Services (DHS) provide relief and recovery information (e.g. through the www.sa.gov.au/recovery website and via social media).

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[6] People at greater risk in an emergency include those with reduced capacity due to the condition of their health, mobility, senses, cognition, language or other circumstances. See also Australian Red Cross (2018) *People at Risk in Communities Framework for South Australia*. Australian Red Cross.

[7] Under South Australian emergency management arrangements, the Control Agency is designated with the authority to task and coordinate other organisations in accordance with the needs of an emergency situation.

Table 1: Control Agencies for different emergencies in South Australia

Emergency	Control Agency
Animal, plant and marine disease	PIRSA
Earthquake; road/transport accident	SA Police (SAPOL)
Extreme heat/storm; flood	State Emergency Service (SES)
Fuel, gas and electricity shortages	Department of State Development (DSD)
Hazardous materials emergencies	Country Fire Service (CFS) or Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS)
Marine pollution (coastal)	Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI)
Rural fire	Country Fire Service (CFS)
Urban fire	Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS)

Photo: Shmelly50/Shutterstock

Goal 3: The welfare of animals directly impacted by an emergency is addressed

Animal owners and managers are responsible for:	Government agencies are responsible for:

• seeking veterinary treatment for injured animals as soon as it is safe to do so
• ensuring severely injured animals are humanely destroyed by someone authorised to do so
• seeking emergency food and water if supplies are damaged or destroyed
• seeking temporary shelter or agistment for animals that cannot remain at their usual location due to damage or destruction of facilities
	• providing coordinated emergency relief for affected animals when normal services are disrupted, including:
	   o assessing types and numbers of animals affected
	   o providing initial veterinary assessment, treatment and advice for injured animals
	   o assisting with humane destruction of severely injured animals
	   o providing information about temporary shelter or agistment
	   o coordinating emergency livestock fodder supplies and other resources
	• coordinating the restoration of essential infrastructure including water and power
	• maintaining relationships with non-government organisations that can provide specialist services and additional support

Key messages

- Animal owners or managers should seek treatment and advice about animal injuries from normal veterinary services in the first instance. See 'Supporting arrangements' for assistance when veterinary services are disrupted, e.g. by a large-scale emergency.
- The agency in control of the emergency (Control Agency) must give permission for anyone to enter an emergency-affected area to treat or humanely destroy injured animals.
- If an animal owner or manager believes early assessment is critical for the welfare of a significant number of livestock in the impacted area they may contact PIRSA Agriculture and Animal Services (PIRSA AAS) for assistance.
- Destruction of an owned animal can only be carried out by the owner or by some competent person with the approval of the owner, by veterinary surgeons or by officers authorised under the *Animal Welfare Act 1985* (e.g. PIRSA Animal Health officers, RSPCA SA inspectors or police officers).
- Any person who has the necessary skills and equipment can humanely destroy a wild animal if the animal is in such a state that it should be destroyed and if the property owner has given permission to do so.
- All destruction of animals should minimise suffering in accordance with the animal welfare standards outlined in the *Animal Welfare Act 1985* and Regulations and Codes of Practice where they exist.
- A permit from DEW is required for the rescue, care and rehabilitation of sick, injured or orphaned wildlife. A permit does not authorise entry into restricted areas during an emergency.

Supporting arrangements

Animal relief services

PIRSA AAS may provide initial animal relief services in affected areas, focusing on livestock[8]. Key organisations that support PIRSA to provide services are known as 'participating agencies'. Together, the participating agencies provide assistance for most types of animals, including companion animals and wildlife.

The participating agencies are: South Australian Veterinary Emergency Management Inc. (SAVEM); Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals South Australia (RSPCA SA), Animal Welfare League (AWL) and Primary Producers SA (PPSA). Livestock SA are a member of PPSA that accept and distribute donated fodder for livestock. See also 'Roles and Services by Organisation'.

Note: if the emergency is a marine oil spill, DPTI is the Control Agency and DEW coordinates wildlife rescue and relief response[9].

Private veterinarians, clinics and wildlife carers play a critical role in the ongoing care of injured animals in the recovery phase after emergency events. See also Goal 5 regarding temporary sheltering of animals and Goal 7 regarding coordination of donated resources for animals.

Industry and business support

Animal welfare impacts within intensive livestock industries (e.g. piggeries, poultry and egg farms, livestock feedlots and dairy farms) may be large-scale, potentially involving hundreds or thousands of animals. Apart from the direct impact of the emergency, animals can be vulnerable to any infrastructure or utility failure that affects feed, water supply, ventilation, milking and the effectiveness of electric fencing.

Representatives of PIRSA AAS may be permitted into an area impacted by an emergency earlier than the general public (e.g. under escort from emergency services) to provide prompt animal relief services. Access to the emergency-affected area for industry advisors to assess the situation may be facilitated at the earliest opportunity by PIRSA AAS, with the authorisation of the agency controlling the emergency.

SA Water leads a group of organisations known as the Engineering Functional Support Group to assist with the restoration of essential infrastructure (e.g. mains water and power).

Photo: PIRSA

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[8] PIRSA Agriculture and Animal Services Hotline - 1800 255 556
[9] Australian Marine Oil Spill Centre and Govt. of SA (2016) *South Australian Oiled Wildlife Response Plan.*

Goal 4: Deceased animals are disposed of promptly in an environmentally safe manner

Animal owners and managers are responsible for:	Government agencies are responsible for:
- promptly disposing of deceased animals in an environmentally responsible manner - keeping details for insurance purposes (e.g. livestock number and type, including photos) - seeking advice if overwhelmed or unable to carry out disposal themselves (see 'Supporting arrangements')	- providing guidelines for environmentally responsible disposal of livestock carcasses - providing advice about support options when animal owners are unable to carry out disposal themselves - providing resources to assist with carcass disposal when those responsible for disposal are unable to organise this themselves in a timely manner

Key messages

- Disposal of deceased animals, particularly large numbers of livestock, is time critical to limit the spread of disease and risks to human and animal health.
- Methods to dispose of deceased animals may include cremation, burial, composting or rendering. Some methods may involve removal and transport off-site. All transport and disposal must be carried out in an environmentally safe and legal manner.
- Disposal of deceased animals that are unidentifiable or unowned (e.g. native or pest animals in the wild) are the responsibility of the owner of the property where the bodies lie (or the lessee, if the land is leased, unless an agreement with the property owner determines otherwise).

Supporting arrangements

Disposal advice

PIRSA AAS provides general advice about carcass disposal options and methods. The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is a participating agency supporting PIRSA AAS. The EPA provides advice about environmental considerations for disposal (Appendix 1).

Support for disposal

Local vet clinics, the AWL and some waste operators may assist with disposal of companion animals.

If livestock owners are unable to carry out disposal of carcasses due to the impact of the emergency, they should firstly seek support from their networks, community, hire contractors and insurers. If these avenues fail, the Local Council may provide support if capacity allows.

In large-scale disaster situations, if support from local government is unavailable, the State Government may coordinate disposal[10].

Disposing of deceased animals may affect people emotionally and financially. Contacts for counselling support may be obtained through a Relief/Recovery Centre (if established) or mental health services.

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[10] Depending on the scale of the incident, either through PIRSA or by the Leader of Disaster Waste Management, as outlined in GISA (2018) *South Australian Disaster Waste Management Plan.* Office of Green Industries SA, Government of South Australia. Also see PIRSA (2018) *Carcass Disposal Arrangements for Emergencies in SA*.

Goal 5: The temporary sheltering of animals is supported

Animal owners and managers are responsible for:	Government agencies are responsible for:
• taking care of their animals if they are taken to a place of refuge during an emergency (e.g. the homes of family or friends, a Relief Centre or another safer place) • finding suitable temporary shelter or agistment for animals that cannot return to, or stay at, emergency-affected properties and cannot remain with them due to accommodation restrictions • keeping vaccinations up to date (which may be a requirement of shelters or boarding establishments) • registering at a Relief Centre to access support services if required	• providing a Relief Centre (if necessary) that offers immediate shelter, information and personal support services for people affected by an emergency • referring people to appropriate organisations or businesses that can support temporary sheltering or agistment (up to 72 hours) for animals when the animals cannot stay at their usual home or with the owner

Key messages

- Temporary shelter for animals may be needed in a variety of situations, for example when:
    - o people that relocate with their animal(s) in response to an emergency event are unable to return home for some time (e.g. the area is unsafe and roads are closed)
    - o the usual residence of the animal(s) is damaged
    - o the person responsible for the animal(s) is incapacitated
    - o animals are found without their owners and the owners cannot be immediately identified or contacted.
- Animal owners should make their own arrangements for temporary sheltering of their animal(s) where possible. Possible locations or facilities should be pre-identified as part of a personal emergency plan or business continuity plan.
- People may seek assistance to find shelter for animals through a Relief Centre (see 'Supporting arrangements'). Assistance animals may accompany their owners into a Relief Centre. For health and safety reasons, people are requested to ensure they control and care for other animals outside Relief Centres.
- Large open spaces such as ovals, recreation grounds, car parks, saleyards, horse racing tracks etc. may be identified as safer places, or places of last resort refuge for people. These should only be used as an immediate temporary refuge for animals when other plans for relocation have failed. Animal owners should appreciate that some of these facilities:
    - o may still be impacted by the emergency
    - o may have quarantine or health and safety requirements that will be breached by the entry of unauthorised animals
    - o may not be suitable to access (given that it will depend on what events may be already happening at that facility, the nature of the emergency and whether access routes are open and safe)
    - o will not usually cater for animals (i.e. there will be no food, no water or appropriate holding facilities unless the manager of the location has arranged for this)
- Congregations of mixed animals may be difficult to manage and can damage public grounds. The animal owner will be responsible for the care of the animals at all times and animals should not be left unsupervised. The animal owner may be liable for any damage caused by their animals.

Supporting arrangements

Safer places and last resort refuges

Some local councils, community organisations and commercial businesses that manage open-space areas may allow animal owners to use these for temporary refuge or point of assembly during an emergency. The use of such venues is very dependent on the individual policy of the owner/manager, the type of emergency and whether the location and access routes will be safe.

Relief centres

In South Australia, Housing SA, as the lead agency of the Emergency Relief Functional Support Group, establishes and manages emergency relief centres.

Relief centres provide for the immediate needs of emergency-affected people. If requested by Housing SA, PIRSA AAS may coordinate appropriate participating agencies (e.g. RSPCA SA, AWL or SAVEM) to assist with controlling animals at a Relief Centre and finding short-term shelter.

Photo: Dorottya Mathe/Shutterstock

Goal 6: People are reunited with their animals as soon as it is safe to do so

Animal owners and managers are responsible for:	Government agencies are responsible for:
• ensuring animals are registered (where applicable) and identifiable • keeping up-to-date records of how their animals are identified (e.g. microchip, tags, brands, registration disc etc.) • looking for their animals if they have strayed in an emergency - only if the area is deemed safe and accessible by the agency controlling the emergency	• determining when and how a closed off emergency-affected area can be accessed for animal welfare considerations • assisting with straying animals (e.g. if they present a danger to the public) • maintaining and promoting the Dogs and Cats Online central registration database www.dogsandcatsonline.com.au as a means to aid in identifying lost dogs and cats and their owners • maintaining a livestock ownership register (National Livestock Identification System)

Key messages

• Entry into emergency-affected areas may be restricted for a number of reasons. For community safety, road closures will often be set up which delay people's return to their properties and any animals remaining there. Animal owners and managers should not attempt to access the area unless permission has been given by the agency controlling the emergency.

• Residents/property owners may be able to enter an affected area earlier than the general public in order to protect their property and livestock (proof of identity or property ownership is required).

• Some emergencies result in damage to fences, gates and other enclosures. As a result, animals may stray onto other properties or roads, potentially creating safety and biosecurity (disease) issues.

• Zoos and establishments holding animals that pose a threat to the public should have plans (that are known to local emergency services) for managing escapees in emergencies.

Supporting arrangements

Managing access to emergency affected areas

The agency controlling an emergency also controls traffic and access into emergency affected areas (in conjunction with SAPOL and DPTI). The agency controlling a bushfire emergency (the CFS) may include animal welfare considerations and protection of livelihood as valid reasons for *bona fide* farming residents to enter a fire-affected area at the first opportunity that it is deemed safe to do so[11].

Finding lost animals

Search for lost or found dogs and cats at 'Dogs and Cats Online'[12]. Owners of lost animals are advised to search the area only if it is safe to do so (access may be restricted). If a search fails, enquire with:

• neighbours
• the Local Council
• the RSPCA SA and Animal Welfare League

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[11] Country Fire Service (2015) *Guidelines for Managing Road Closures during Bushfires*. Country Fire Service and SA Police, Government of South Australia. Available at www.cfs.sa.gov.au (warnings and incidents page).

[12] Animal must have a tag/registration number or microchip number – go to www.dogsandcatsonline.com.au

- local veterinary clinics and animal shelters

If these sources do not have the animal(s) or know of their whereabouts, try internet websites and social media pages that can aid in searching for lost animals (e.g. 'Lost Pets of South Australia' or 'Lost Dogs of Adelaide').

Managing straying animals

SAPOL and/or local council staff may temporarily contain stray animals within a pound or shelter or (for livestock) on the nearest suitable property. Local council staff may notify owners (if possible through tag, brand or microchip identification) otherwise a notice may be posted (e.g. on relevant council websites).

Veterinarians and SAVEM also have microchip readers and may assist with identification of microchipped animals. PIRSA may identify and contact owners of straying livestock that have National Livestock Identification System tags.

Not all areas will have appropriate impounding facilities and staff may not be immediately available, so property owners and community members and play a role in assisting to contain stray animals, if it is safe to do so.

Photo: Cattle with NLIS tags. PIRSA

Goal 7: Volunteers and donated resources are managed to support animals as required

Animal owners and managers are responsible for:	Government agencies are responsible for:
• providing the requirements for animal management and welfare (e.g. halters, leashes, cages or fencing, food, water, etc.) • registering with an official Relief/Recovery Centre if impacted by the emergency and requiring assistance that cannot be provided by family, friends or community support	• promoting appropriate funds/charities as a means for people to donate money for an event-specific appeal • assisting non-government organisations that manage volunteers and donations to link in to the recovery needs of affected communities • working with and promoting Volunteering SA&NT as a key provider of volunteer services

Key messages

- The preferred way to support affected people and communities, according to national guidelines for managing donated goods[13], is through collection and distribution of money rather than goods, unless specific items are required. This allows affected people to purchase what they need most. It also allows people to spend money in their communities and help local businesses to recover.
- A range of community groups exist (or may form) to help people and animals after emergencies. Such groups and official recovery teams should communicate with each other to ensure resources and efforts of all parties are coordinated and are targeted at the areas of greatest need.
- People often want to help rescue animals at risk and to care for injured animals. Only volunteers that have prior emergency management training and are a member of an official response organisation (e.g. SAVEM) are used during an initial emergency response within an affected area. Untrained volunteers can hinder initial response efforts, place themselves and others at risk and unintentionally act illegally if they handle animals without the appropriate authorisation or training.
- Although people often wish to volunteer as soon as an emergency has occurred, most volunteers are needed during the recovery process, which can last months or a number of years.

Supporting arrangements

Coordination of recovery support

The State Recovery Office coordinates recovery support services for people affected by emergencies in South Australia. A Recovery Centre and Local Recovery Committee may be set up for communities affected by major emergencies.

Managing volunteers

People who would like to volunteer can register with Volunteering SA&NT. Volunteering SA&NT manages the placement of volunteers into relevant organisations that can utilise their skills to assist with recovery efforts.

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[13] Department for Families and Communities (2011) *National Guidelines for Managing Donated Goods*. Attorney-General's Department, Australian Government and Government of South Australia.

SAVEM offers training in emergency management for veterinarians and veterinary nurses who would like to volunteer for emergency responses in South Australia.

Managing donated goods for animals

After fires and floods, emergency fodder and other resources may be required for livestock. Donations of these items are accepted and distributed by Primary Producers SA (through Livestock SA).

RSPCA SA, AWL and SAVEM coordinate donated resources for animals other than livestock when specific goods are required.

Photo: PIRSA

Goal 8:   Land and ecosystems are rehabilitated to support livestock and wildlife

Animal owners and managers are responsible for:	Government agencies are responsible for:
• identifying the impact of the emergency on their property and making appropriate plans for restoration • replacing destroyed infrastructure (e.g. troughs, fences, feeding equipment etc.) required by their animals • restoring the soils, water and environments that support their animals • seeking assistance for financial and technical support if required	• participating in Local Recovery Committees and obtaining information regarding local land rehabilitation needs • providing information to primary producers on livestock management options, land and water management, financial grants (if available), assistance for rebuilding infrastructure and primary industry business recovery • providing information to land owners on natural resource management, ecosystem recovery, pest plant and animal control, wildlife habitat restoration and financial grants (if available) • encouraging the community to assist with recovery of infrastructure (e.g. fencing) and wildlife habitats (including through the support of volunteer programs)

Key messages

- Land owners are responsible for the management and rehabilitation of land under the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004.*
- Land owners may need to support the rehabilitation process by:
    - removing/recycling debris and waste
    - stabilising and replenishing soils
    - replacing fencing and associated infrastructure
    - managing livestock grazing to enable recovery of pastures and native vegetation
    - controlling pest plants and animals
    - revegetating, if needed
    - restoring natural watercourse flows (e.g. if these are disrupted by debris)
- If damage to a property is extensive, the recovery process may be an opportunity to update property design, layout and infrastructure to improve productivity and environmental values.

Supporting arrangements

Rural recovery programs that assist land owners with property planning and the rehabilitation of land and ecosystems may be developed with the assistance of PIRSA, DEW, boards overseeing natural resources management, local councils and environmental organisations.

Information may be made available at a Local Recovery Centre (if established) and/or through websites of the organisations listed.

ROLES AND SERVICES BY ORGANISATION

Introduction

The following sections outline the current services that may be offered by a range of agencies and non-government organisations to support animal owners carry out their responsibilities.

The extent of services available may vary by region. Response and recovery services are dependent on the capacity of each organisation at the time and whether the organisation is itself impacted by the emergency.

Animal Welfare League of South Australia (AWL)

Role: The AWL is a non-government organisation that provides care and adoption services to lost and abandoned cats and dogs in South Australia.

The AWL is a participating agency supporting PIRSA Agriculture and Animal Services (PIRSA AAS).

Emergency Stage	Current Services
Prevention/Preparedness	• Provide the public with information about how to plan for and manage companion animals in emergency situations

Response	• In conjunction with other participating agencies, and under direction of PIRSA (or other relevant Control Agency) provide:
	   ○ emergency pickups
	   ○ assistance with euthanasia of injured animals
	   ○ emergency accommodation for small animals and small numbers of larger domestic livestock (e.g. valuable breeding stock)
	   ○ cremation of deceased animals

Recovery	• Direct enquiries about donations to official relief fund contacts and coordinate resources donated to AWL • Provide advice to companion animal owners on issues relating to animal welfare • Provide assistance to temporarily house displaced companion animals (primarily dogs and cats; limited space for small caged companion animals and horses) • Reunite lost dogs and cats that are brought to AWL with their owners (when identification details allow) • Hold register of lost dogs and cats brought to, or reported to, AWL and respond to enquiries from owners searching for lost companion animals

Australian Veterinary Association (AVA)

Role: The AVA is the professional non-government organisation that represents veterinarians across Australia. The South Australian branch of the AVA is a participating agency supporting PIRSA AAS.

Emergency Stage	Current Services
Prevention / Preparedness	• Provide online resources for animal owners to assist with preparing for natural disasters • Prepare and distribute fact sheets and other technical information to veterinarians treating injured animals
Response	When activated by PIRSA for incidents with significant animal welfare impacts, the AVA will activate the AVA Emergency Taskforce to: • Contact AVA members and other relevant stakeholders who may be affected to gather information about the situation • Inform AVA members and other relevant stakeholders about the emergency response • Utilise the resources of the AVA Communications Team as appropriate • Assist PIRSA with the dissemination of relevant information • Facilitate contact with volunteer veterinarians and veterinary nurses to establish opportunities to assist in the provision of animal welfare support services in affected areas • Assist in the identification of veterinarians and practices within affected regions • Report urgent animal welfare needs arising from the emergency to PIRSA and SAVEM • Disseminate information and advice for veterinarians regarding the treatment of wildlife • Liaise with SAVEM and provide assistance where possible
Recovery	• Advise the AVA Benevolent Fund of veterinarians in difficult financial circumstances as a result of the emergency

Country Fire Service (CFS)

Role: The South Australian CFS is an emergency services agency. The CFS has a volunteer network that delivers professional fire and rescue services to outer metropolitan, regional and rural South Australia. The CFS is the Control Agency for rural fire and hazardous or dangerous materials emergencies.

Emergency Stage	Current Services
Prevention / Preparedness	• Work with key stakeholders in the development and provision of appropriate animal welfare information relating to bushfires • Embed animals in community engagement programs, to ensure that owners and managers prepare plans which include animals • Work with businesses holding animals to include them in their planning for bushfire
Response	• If the CFS is the Control Agency, ensure appropriate, timely information is provided to the community through a range of sources • Ensure animal welfare and other rural issues are identified through initial impact assessment activities and are referred to PIRSA
Recovery	• Ensure that the community is aware of the source of information regarding support for animals affected by emergencies

Department for Environment and Water (DEW)

Role: DEW is a participating agency supporting PIRSA AAS and has fire-fighting crews that support the CFS. DEW also provides information about flood risks.

Emergency Stage	Current Services
Prevention / Preparedness	• Work with the State Emergency Service to provide information for community education programs about planning and preparing for floods that include animal welfare messages
Response	• Provide information on threatened species or ecological communities that are at risk from the emergency to assist in prioritisation • Promote the humane treatment of injured wildlife and other animals during and after emergencies • Liaise with PIRSA AAS and participating agencies to facilitate the management of injured wildlife • Provide advice to the community about companion animals in consultation with the Dog and Cat Management Board and Local Councils • Coordinate wildlife rescue and relief activities in the event of a marine oil spill
Recovery	• Provide advice to the community regarding wildlife and companion animals after an emergency • Provide advice about the rehabilitation of natural resources and ecosystems

Environment Protection Authority (EPA)

Role: The EPA is South Australia's independent environment protection regulator. It is a member of the State Response Advisory Group and a participating agency supporting PIRSA AAS.

Emergency Stage	Current Services
Prevention/Preparedness	In the role of advisory group member: • Provide information to agencies and organisations about environmental protection (e.g. waste disposal considerations) in order to inform emergency management plans and policy development
Response	In the role of a participating agency supporting PIRSA AAS: • Provide information jointly prepared by PIRSA and the EPA to assist primary producers and emergency services in the initial review of the safe and appropriate disposal of up to 100 animal carcasses • Provide direct advice on disposal options for greater than 100 carcasses
Recovery	In the role of a participating agency supporting PIRSA AAS: • Provide advice regarding disposal options for carcasses and other waste products throughout the recovery period

Photo: PIRSA

Local Government Association (LGA)

Role: The Local Government Association of South Australia (LGA) provides service and leadership relevant to the needs of member Councils and is the peak representative body for Local Government in South Australia. The LGA is the leader of the Local Government Functional Support Group.

Emergency Stage	Current Services
Prevention/Preparedness	• Assist with state-wide policy development regarding local government planning and response to animal issues in emergencies
Response	• Assist with the coordination and provision of equipment and logistics support
Recovery	• Assist with the coordination and provision of equipment and logistics support

Local Government

Role: The following table outlines assistance that may be provided through local government. The provision of services is dependent on the individual policies of the relevant council(s) and capacity at the time of an emergency.

Emergency Stage	Current Services
Prevention/Preparedness	• Provide emergency preparedness information to the community • Identify and plan the necessary logistics for carcass disposal including identification of suitable carcass disposal sites (if necessary)

Response	• If animal owners are unable to dispose of carcasses using their own means, supply machinery and personnel to assist with:
	
	    o the disposal of carcasses by cartage of deceased livestock to burial or cremation sites, an abattoir or composting facility
	
	    o the preparation and management of burial/cremation sites
	
	• Provide local knowledge on sites of significance, access routes and other issues which may assist (or impede) the response

Recovery	• Assist with the management of stray livestock (if capacity allows) • Assist with managing lost companion animals through existing pound and shelter facilities and by accessing Dogs and Cats Online database • Assist with local recovery programs that include the rehabilitation of land and natural ecosystems

Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS)

Role: The South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) is the primary agency providing structural firefighting services to South Australia. The MFS is the Control Agency for urban fire, hazardous or dangerous materials emergencies, and search and rescue (structure).

Emergency Stage	Current Services
Prevention/Preparedness	• Include animal welfare arrangements in relevant emergency management plans • Ensure animal welfare arrangements are included in educational material and community presentations on home fire safety planning • Provide information to the community regarding the supervision of companion animals when using electrical and gas appliances
Response	• When the MFS is the Control Agency for an incident, ensure the information provided to the community through a range of sources, includes dealing with animals • Where possible ensure MFS personnel responding to incidents are aware of the potential presence of animals and the impact of mitigation operations on them • Ensure animal welfare is identified during initial impact assessment activities and is referred to the appropriate agency • As a support agency provide support to other control agencies when dealing with animals affected by emergencies
Recovery	• Ensure information on where to access support for animals affected by emergencies is available to first responders and the community

Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA)

Role: PIRSA is a key economic development agency in the Government of South Australia, with responsibility for the prosperity of the State's primary industries and regions. PIRSA is the Lead Agency providing Agriculture and Animal Services.

Emergency Stage	Current Services

Prevention/Preparedness	• Provide the public and other agencies with information about emergency animal- and plant-disease risks
	
	• Provide information to the public and other agencies that enables planning and management of livestock in emergencies
	
	• Ensure that PIRSA AAS is ready to respond to an incident and to initiate recovery measures. This includes:
	  o identifying and assessing the risk
	  o developing policy, arrangements and plans
	  o establishing resources, systems and processes
	  o training response/recovery personnel and educating stakeholders and potentially affected industries and communities

Emergency Stage	Current Services
	o conducting exercises o evaluating preparedness and response activities

Response	• Control and lead the response for emergency animal disease incursions in accordance with national and state response plans
	
	• When activated by the Control Agency during a response (for an emergency other than animal disease), coordinate PIRSA AAS staff and participating agencies to provide animal relief services including:
	    o inspection, assessment and treatment of injured livestock
	    o humane livestock destruction
	    o advice regarding carcass disposal
	    o temporary shelter for displaced companion animals
	    o coordination of the supply and distribution of emergency fodder, water, fencing and other materials
	    o communication with industry and the community
	
	• Request services from Functional Support Groups to enable relief activities described above if other resources are overwhelmed
	
	• Provide advice and messages about animal welfare to the Control Agency and others as relevant
	
	• Provide appropriate debrief opportunities for PIRSA AAS participating agencies to improve operational understanding
	
	• Provide support for marine oil spills to DPTI and/or DEW if requested

Recovery	• Communicate with industry and the community to facilitate recovery of primary producers and relevant production systems • Provide information and assistance to primary producers seeking to access financial support, where available, in order to facilitate recovery

Primary Producers SA (PPSA)

Role: PPSA is a coalition of peak bodies representing primary producers in South Australia. PPSA is made up of a number of member groups: Livestock SA, Grain Producers SA, the Horticulture Coalition of SA, the Wine Grape Council of SA and the SA Dairyfarmers Association. PPSA is a participating agency supporting PIRSA AAS.

Emergency Stage	Current Services
Response	• Assist PIRSA through providing liaison with primary producers and the agriculture, horticulture and viticulture sectors, and provide advice relating to these sectors • Assist PIRSA with local primary producer contacts, as appropriate • Communicate with PPSA's member groups, as appropriate, and support PIRSA's communications • Liaise with PIRSA to determine the type and scale of relief services required for primary producers (e.g. emergency fodder) and coordinate the distribution of donated goods
Recovery	• Assist with coordination of recovery services for primary producers including communicating with stakeholders and facilitating access to resources (e.g. donated fodder, agistment, fencing, machinery) • Assist with the dissemination of relevant information to primary producers

Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SA) (RSPCA SA)

Role: The RSPCA SA is a non-government organisation which aims to prevent suffering and cruelty to all animals and actively promote their care. RSPCA SA is a participating agency supporting PIRSA AAS.

Emergency Stage	Current Services
Prevention/Preparedness	• Provide the public with advice on planning for and managing animals (particularly companion animals and assistance animals) in emergency situations

Response	• When activated by PIRSA provide:
	
	  o initial reconnaissance of affected areas and reports on animal welfare needs
	
	  o assistance for injured animals
	
	  o assistance with animal control
	
	  o authorised emergency information through RSPCA SA's social media, website and phone enquiries

Recovery	• Coordinate and manage donations of resources for animals (other than for livestock) made to RSPCA SA and/or direct enquiries to official relief fund contacts • Managing lost companion animals brought or reported to the RSPCA SA • Provide advice to companion animal owners on issues relating to animal welfare

South Australian Veterinary Emergency Management Inc. (SAVEM)

Role: SAVEM is a non-government organisation created to enable the veterinary community in South Australia to mount an effective response to an emergency incident involving animals. SAVEM is a participating agency supporting PIRSA AAS.

Emergency Stage	Current Services
Prevention/Preparedness	- Provide advice to agencies, organisations and the community regarding animal management and welfare in emergencies - Assist in the provision of skills development for volunteers by supporting training and exercises where possible
Response	When activated by PIRSA: - Undertake animal welfare assessment and veterinary care (including rescue, triage and treatment) for all animals in accordance with established emergency management procedures - Ensure that animal welfare issues identified through initial impact assessment activities are referred to PIRSA AAS for information, and possible action by PIRSA AAS or participating agencies as appropriate - Assist in the relocation of injured animals to external clinicians or carers - If required, liaise with other participating agencies to provide suitable short-term relocation options for animals presenting at relief centres (where they cannot return home or be suitably relocated with the owner) - Provide situation reports to PIRSA in accordance with established procedures
Recovery	- Identify and coordinate long-term care and boarding for displaced animals - Establish return and/or release programs for recovered wildlife subject to DEW approval and appropriate permits - Participate in Community Reference Groups at invitation of Local Recovery Committee - Coordinate and manage resources for animals (other than livestock) donated to SAVEM

State Emergency Service (SES)

Role: The SES is an agency with a volunteer-base that responds to a wide range of emergencies and rescues. The SES is the Control Agency for flood and extreme weather.

Emergency Stage	Current Services
Prevention/Preparedness	• Provide information to support the community to understand risks associated with extreme weather (heat, storms and floods) • Provide information to support the community to plan and act on days of extreme weather that incorporates appropriate animal welfare messages
Response	• When a Control Agency, ensure approved animal welfare messages are provided to the media and community where relevant • Provide services to support the rescue of large animals with specialist equipment (applicable to some transport accidents and minor incidents; availability in large-scale emergencies subject to priority assessment) • Ensure that animal welfare and other rural issues identified through initial impact assessment activities are referred to PIRSA

South Australia Police (SAPOL)

Role: SAPOL is an agency that provides a range of policing services to keep South Australians safe. SAPOL is the Control Agency for aircraft accident, bomb threat, earthquake, siege/hostage, marine transport accidents, road and rail accidents and terrorist incident.

Emergency Stage	Current Services
Prevention/Preparedness	• Ensure animal welfare arrangements are considered and included in all relevant SAPOL state, regional and incident plans
Response	• When a Control Agency, ensure approved animal welfare messages are provided to the community and media where relevant • Ensure arrangements are in place at traffic management points that allow effective and timely delivery of animal welfare support services into impacted areas consistent with agreed guidelines • Ensure that animal welfare and other rural issues identified through initial impact assessment activities are referred to PIRSA

DEFINITIONS

Word	Definition
Agency	A Government agency, including Commonwealth, State or local government authority.
Animal	A member of any vertebrate species with the exception of humans and fish (*Animal Welfare Act 1985*).
Animal industry bodies	Associations and organisations representing the interests of people involved in animal industries such as Horse SA, Pork SA, South Australian Dairyfarmers Association etc.
Animal owner	A person who has custody and control of the animal.
Animal manager	A person placed in charge of animals by the owner of an organisation or business (e.g. farm manager, manager of pet shelter etc.).
Animal welfare	How an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives: an animal is in a good state of welfare if it is healthy, comfortable, well-nourished, safe, able to express innate behavior and is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear and distress.
Assistance animal	An animal (usually a dog) trained and used, or undergoing training to be used, for the purpose of assisting a person who is wholly or partially disabled (also known as 'disability animal') and includes guide dogs, hearing dogs and autism dogs.
Biosecurity	Biosecurity is the management of risks to the economy, the environment, and the community, of pests and diseases entering, emerging, establishing or spreading.
Carcass	The body of a deceased animal, usually in relation to livestock.
Code of practice	A set of standards or guidelines outlining best practice within an industry.
Companion animal	A pet or other domestic animal that provides companionship to its owner.
Control Agency	An agency in control of an emergency and has authority to task and coordinate other organisations in accordance with the needs of the situation.
Disaster	A sudden accident or a natural catastrophe that causes great damage or loss of life. In South Australia, a disaster is declared by the Governor.
Displaced people	People displaced from their homes during and immediately after an emergency event.
Emergency	As per the *Emergency Management Act 2004*, an emergency is an event that causes, or threatens to cause: • the death of, or injury or other damage to the health of, any person; or • the destruction of, or damage to, any property; or • a disruption to essential services or to services usually enjoyed by the community; or • harm to the environment, or to flora or fauna and is not limited to naturally occurring events.
Emergency management	As per the State Emergency Management Plan: a range of measures to manage risks to communities and the environment. It involves the development and

Word	Definition
	maintenance of arrangements to prevent or mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters.
Euthanasia	Euthanasia is the practice of intentionally ending a life in order to relieve pain and suffering.
Functional Support Group	A Functional Support Group is a group of participating agencies (government and non-government) who perform a functional role to support response and recovery operations for all emergencies. Each Functional Support Group has a nominated lead agency which supports its operations. Note: Functional Support Groups were formerly known as Functional Services.
Hazard	Source of potential harm (e.g. earthquake, bushfire, flood etc.).
Livestock	Animals generally kept on farming or rural properties including, but not limited to, cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, alpacas, poultry, deer and horses.
Participating agency	An agency or organisation that has agreed to be part of a Functional Support Group. An agency may be involved in more than one Functional Support Group.
Preparedness	Arrangements to ensure that, should an emergency occur, all those resources and services which are needed to cope with the effects can be efficiently mobilised and deployed.
Prevention	Regulatory and physical measures to ensure that emergencies are prevented, or their effects mitigated.
Relief	The provision of immediate shelter, life support and basic needs to those affected by emergencies.
Relief centre	A centre where the provisions of emergency relief services to persons affected by an emergency are met. It may include short term shelter, information, personal support, food, temporary accommodation, practical advice, basic first aid, interpreter services, companion animal care, financial assistance and referrals.
Relocation	Movement by choice from an area that is likely to be impacted by an emergency, hazard or threat to a safer location. Note: movement out of an area deemed to be at risk of an emergency event, as ordered by an authorised person, is termed 'evacuation'.
Response	Measures taken during an emergency to protect life or property or to otherwise respond to the emergency.
Recovery	Measures taken during or after an emergency to assist the re-establishment of the normal pattern of life of individuals, families and communities affected by the emergency.
Stakeholders	Those people and organisations that can affect, be affected by, or perceive themselves to be affected by a decision or activity.

APPENDIX 1: PLANNING RESOURCES

The agencies and organisations listed below are major providers of animal-related emergency planning information. Local councils and other animal interest groups may also provide topic-specific or local information.

Plan animal relocation options in advance through contacting family, friends or private businesses (e.g. those that offer pet day-care, boarding or agistment facilities). For horses, community-run websites that assist with forward planning include 'Open Paddocks South Australia' on Facebook and 'Firebuddies' at www.firebuddies.weebly.com

Provider of Information	Type of Information	Website
State Government (SAFECOM)	Overview of all hazards and risks and related emergency planning information, including for animals	www.sa.gov.au/emergencies
AVA	Animals in natural disasters	www.ava.com.au
CFS	Prepare for a fire (pets, livestock and horses) Guidelines for re-entry to closed areas Community Fire Safe Program and Firey Women Workshops Workshops to plan for large animals (e.g. horses) may be conducted in conjunction with other stakeholders subject to funding	www.cfs.sa.gov.au www.youtube.com (search for SA County Fire Service)
DEW	Native animal information Regional natural resources recovery information	www.environment.sa.gov.au www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au
EPA	On-farm disposal of animal carcasses	www.epa.sa.gov.au
Horse SA	Horse emergency information warehouse includes: • My Horse Disaster Plan • Large Animal Rescue Emergency planning workshops for horse owners	www.horsesa.asn.au
PIRSA	Livestock emergency information warehouse Animal safety in emergencies, relief and recovery	www.pir.sa.gov.au/emergency_management
Red Cross	Redi-Plan (include animals in a personal emergency plan)	www.redcross.org.au
RSPCA SA	Pet and assistance animal emergency information warehouse (Pets in Emergencies) • Considerations for pets or assistance animals in a personal emergency plan • Pet emergency kit considerations	www.rspcasa.org.au
SES	How to keep your pets safe in an emergency	www.ses.sa.gov.au