



animal management in rural and remote indigenous communities
caring for companion animals in first nations... and their companions

Guidelines for communities seeking Dog Health Programs

Communities seeking veterinary services may need to enter into negotiations about the extent and types of services they require from the veterinarian. Several factors may need to be considered when establishing a contract of service such as:

- Is the vet registered to practice in your state or territory?
- What services are required – eg surgical desexing or chemicals to control dog fertility.
- Are the rates a flat daily rate or based on a fee for service rate?
- Does the dog program include medicines to treat and control skin conditions and intestinal parasites?
- Are vaccinations included or are they charged separately to individuals?
- Does the program include other treatments or services such as attending to infected eyes or dog attacks whilst the vet is in the community?
- How will the vet report back to the council and community on the progress of the program?
- Do the fees include travel expenses such as airfares or mileage? If not, how are these to be added into the cost of the program?
- Does the council provide accommodation or does the vet need to arrange this for themselves?
- Will the council provide a vehicle if the vet flies to the community?
- Is there an existing program for the vet to join in with, and Environmental Health Workers or Animal Management Workers to direct the work of the vet?
- How will the vet be assisted by local staff?
- Is the vet happy to train local staff in the delivery of any medications as per current poisons legislation?
- Will the vet provide education/information sessions to the community, schools, clinic or council?
- Have they had any cultural awareness training or experience in working with Indigenous people?
- Will they be contactable off-site for continued support of community programs?
- Do they intend to continue to provide a service to the community if required?

Communities may also want to consider who pays for the program.

In some communities Indigenous community members contribute to the treatment of their pets through a scheme where council asks individuals to contribute to the costs of the vet visit, or the visit is subsidized by dog registration fees. Each community will have its own system of paying for the veterinary services.

Another factor to consider is does the program include the animals owned by non-indigenous workers living in the community? Some communities and vets are happy for these animals to be included in a program, while other communities and vets like to keep these animals separate financially. In some cases, the non-Indigenous staff pays the vets directly, or they may pay the council a fee.

Contracting the services of a vet should be a fair and equitable process for all involved. AMRRIC has developed a document: ***The Principles of AMRRIC Dog Health Programs*** to help you to choose the veterinarian who best suits the needs of your community.