

THE NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR ANIMALS IN EMERGENCIES: WHAT ROLE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT?

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There is good evidence that communities cope better during and after emergencies if companion animals are integrated into emergency planning. Despite this, Local Government Animal Management often finds it very hard to have a voice in the preparation of community disaster response plans. Animal Management at the end of the day is all about municipal health, safety and amenity. These are central issues in disaster situations and yet Animal Management is sometimes overlooked in disaster planning despite being at the frontline of animal response. Following the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires, the Victorian Emergency Animal Welfare Plan was born. The National Advisory Committee for Animals in Emergencies is encouraging other states to follow suit and has developed national planning principles for animals in disasters that recognizes the key role of local government. This paper will explain how the Victorian Emergency Animal Welfare Plan and the national planning principles link with Animal Management services in Local Government.