

Accessing accommodation and care for pets in times of family violence: information for service providers

The Epping Animal Welfare Facility (EAWF), operated by RSPCA Victoria (RSPCA), will accommodate and care for domestic animals of residents impacted by family violence in the cities of Whittlesea, Darebin and Moreland. This does not apply to restricted breed or declared dangerous dogs.

Type of care and time limits

Temporary care for domestic animals will be provided for up to three weeks and can be a combination of foster care and through the EAWF.

Extended timeframes will be considered on a case by case basis.

Animals other than cats or dogs may be considered on a case by case basis.

Nominated contact person/agency

If the owner of the domestic animal in care is unable to maintain suitable contact with the EAWF for the duration of its stay, a case worker or other person or agency **must** be nominated to fulfil this role.

Costs

Specialist family violence services, or other relevant service agency, are asked to cover the cost of RSPCA's daily welfare boarding fee (currently \$5 per day) plus fees for vaccinations if applicable.

Where this is not possible, councils will cover the cost of accommodation up to a limit of three weeks. Microchipping and registration fees will be waived by each council.

The cost of basic medical care will be borne by RSPCA in accordance with its policies. More complex medical care will not be undertaken without the owner's or nominated contact person/agency's consent. These costs will be borne by the owner, nominated contact person/agency or via a support service.

Reunification

Upon approaching the end of the domestic animal's stay, the owner or nominated contact person/agency will be contacted by EAWF to arrange reunification.

All reasonable attempts to reunite the animal with its owner will be pursued, including contacting the local Victoria Police Family Violence Investigation Unit/s.



Where repeated attempts to contact the owner or nominated contact person/agency have failed over a period of two weeks (after the agreed care period has ended), the animal will be deemed to be abandoned and will be subject to usual RSPCA processes.

Access point

Specialist family violence services, Victoria Police and/or other relevant service agencies can contact the Animal Management Team on 9217 2170.

Individuals are encouraged to speak to a support worker who can arrange for this support by calling the above number.

For more information and to read the Domestic Animal Welfare Support Policy go to <https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/community-support/children-and-families/family-violence-support-service-information/>

If you or someone you know is impacted by family violence you can call Safe Steps on 1800 015 188. In an emergency call 000 (triple zero).

Contact us

 **Phone** 9217 2170
Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm
After hours service for emergencies only
Building and planning enquiries
9217 2259 or buildplan@whittlesea.vic.gov.au

National Relay Service
133 677 (ask for 9217 2170)

Free telephone interpreter service
 **131 450**

 **Email** info@whittlesea.vic.gov.au
 **Website** whittlesea.vic.gov.au
 **Mail** Locked Bag 1,
Bundoora MDC VIC 3083