



23 August 2021

MEDIA STATEMENT

In response to media enquiries regarding the euthanising of 15 dogs at the Bourke Animal Pound last week, Council advises that it had had five (5) dogs in its Pound since early August, with one of the dogs having had a litter of 14 pups whilst in the Pound, of which four (4) had died. Two (2) of the dogs had been surrendered to Council, and had shown aggression towards Pound Staff, with three (3) of the dogs having been picked up whilst roaming the streets. None of the dogs were registered or chipped.

The Bourke Animal Shelter has only five (5) dog holding pens, with these pens having been at capacity, and with two (2) of the dogs constantly being very aggressive against each other, concerns were raised by staff. Re-homing of the dogs was investigated, noting that Bourke does not have a dog re-homer in town. Council made contact with its regular dog re-homer, who resides some distance from Bourke, on two (2) occasions, however the re-homer was unavailable.

The relevant Council staff have certificates in animal welfare and given Council's unsuccessful attempts at alternative action, that the dogs had been in the Pound well in excess of the time required by the Companion Animal Act and coupled with Council seeking to stop people from other communities entering Bourke given the level of vulnerability in the community (with all regional NSW under stay-at-home orders at the time), the decision was made to euthanise the dogs.

Bourke has supported the rehoming of animals both in the past and will continue to do so in the future. Such action has seen Council's euthanising rates have drop from around 95%, a few years ago, to near zero such that it is now approaching nearly 100% of dogs being re-homed, up until this required action.

Council is reviewing its re-homing practices and will be reaching out to organisations who may be able to assist, during these difficult times.

These are difficult times for all communities but especially for Far Western towns like Bourke. The town is in a tenuous situation at the moment with COVID. Positive cases are on the increase. Council is being very careful with people entering Bourke. The majority of Council staff have been stood down to avoid the virus spreading further in the community.

ENDS
