

INQUIRY INTO POUNDS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I will only be speaking from my knowledge of the pound in Cowra.

a. Funding available during the next financial year is \$140,000, this includes an upgrade of a small cat area and new fencing. Outside exercise areas need to be properly grassed, cages need to be protected from the weather. There could be funds transferred from the tourist budget to the pound. The Council does have healthy resources available for an upgrade. Please refer to the upgrade of Bathurst pound.

b. The pound buildings are located within the garbage tip, there is no protection from the weather. There are 16 cages and a small unventolated room for the cats, one small room which is covered and does not receive sunlight.

c. Welfare challenges are extreme. Up until June 2023 there was no bedding provided for dogs. As a result of a public campaign Council was flooded with donations of bedding. To my knowledge no bedding had been provided since 2015 when I first became aware of the pound. Volunteers are not allowed at the pound so therefore there is no enrichment in their lives, very little human contact, no socialisation with other dogs. Dogs are not desexed when they leave the pound.

d. I feel that the laws and regulations are adequate however enforcement of those laws and regulations need to be stricter. Standard practices to be used in all council pounds need to be enforced. An audit trail from whence an animal enters the pound needs to be introduced. Outcomes for all animals need to be published. Record keeping needs to be tracked by the OLG. There used to be an old exercise book used in Cowra for record keeping and from this the yearly return was submitted to OLG.

e. The factors influencing animals ending up in pounds is varied and solely rests on their human owners. Lack of knowledge in caring for an animal, housing situation, lack of funds, personal empathy. Strategies could include more frequent education programs on pet ownership, Cowra Council does not conduct any education programs.

f. I am unable to comment on the adequacy of reporting as I do not know the procedures for reporting but as I said Cowra used to use an old exercise book.

g. Behaviour assessments should be carried out by a trained assessor. As exists at Cowra the head Ranger has admitted that he does not have empathy for dogs, this in turn creates a situation where dogs are fearful and do not show their true personalities.

h. The relationship between the pound and rescue should be transparent. Immediately rescue should be advised of any new dogs entering the pound so the rehoming process can begin. Ranger checks for a microchip, checks the register, follows up with the owner. If no owner is found then after the holding period rescue should be arranged. At the moment the local rescue is not taking on any more fosters because they have a vet bill to pay

At one stage the Ranger was not advising the rescue of any impounded dogs and a request was put out via Facebook that if anyone was attending the pound for them to take photos, but council does not let the public see the animals so any photos that emerged were taken with a zoom lens.

i. Cat desexing programs should be promoted by councils which is not done in Cowra. At least a monthly program is required. Also the education of cat owners is required. This is not done either. Desexing prices should be made more affordable for cat owners. A mobile desexing clinic travelling around the country areas with appointments made for say a month at a time.

j. Strategies to improve Cowra Pound, refurbishment of the building to include adequate shelter, transparency between the Ranger and rescue, visitors be allowed to view animals, volunteers be allowed to socialise and exercise animals, a Ranger with empathy be employed, education programs be introduced in the Shire, desexing programs to be sponsored by Council.

These comments above are my views on what is needed generally and in particular Cowra Pound. Thankyou.