

FAQ – Campaspe Animal Shelter Transition

Campaspe Animal Shelter will transition from a shelter to a pound over the next 12 months, with the express aim of delivering better animal welfare outcomes for lost or stray cats and dogs, as well as providing financial efficiency across the service.

Like many Councils, Campaspe Shire is moving away from a shelter model where lost or stray animals are held for extended periods of time awaiting adoption, and instead will move to a pound service where animals will be placed in the hands of a rescue or animal welfare group after 8 days.

Given the popularity and community support for the service, Council has prepared an FAQ with common questions and answers relating to the proposed transitional changes.

What does the change mean?

From 1 October 2025, owners will still be able to claim their lost pet up to 8 days after their dog or cat comes into the pound, the difference is that stray animals will then be put in the hands of rescue and animal welfare groups who nurture, re-train and foster animals before placing in a forever home. There will be no adoptions from the Campaspe Shire facility.

Why is the change being made?

Council recently conducted a service review of the animal shelter that showed the current model is categorically not in the best interest of the animal, nor is it financially efficient. Our shelter and dedicated animal attendants have done an amazing job for many years, homing unwanted, lost or stray animals. The reality is many animals are held in the shelter for extended periods of time which is not considered the best animal welfare outcome.

Aren't existing rehoming services already exhausted?

Council is aware of the current challenges across Victoria in rehoming animals. Whilst many rehoming services are currently facing similar challenges to Council in relation to rehoming animals, Council has had many promising discussions with other organisations and is confident of a solution that prioritises animal welfare. Further, the 12-month transition period will allow Council sufficient time to ensure the future service continues to prioritise animal welfare.

Council has recently upgraded infrastructure at the facility, is this now wasted?

No. Under the Domestic Animal Act, Councils are required to ensure animal facilities meet minimum standards. These infrastructure standards are required regardless of whether Council runs the facility as a pound or a shelter. Recent upgrades and planned upgrades to the facility are necessary to ensure Council continues to meet our legislative responsibilities.

Further, Council is committed to exploring future commercial opportunities to utilise our facilities for other purposes such as boarding and temporary animal accommodation services.

Will the change result in an increase in animal euthanasia rates?

The euthanasia of animals is an unfortunate reality. However, Councils' priority is the welfare of animals first and foremost. Future partnership opportunities will ensure rehoming organisations share Council's commitment to animal welfare and euthanasia of animals is undertaken only when absolutely necessary.

Will animals be automatically euthanased after the mandatory 8 day holding period?

No. At the conclusion of the 8-day statutory holding period, animals must either be made available for rehoming, placed in an appropriate foster care or euthanased. Council will avoid any unnecessary euthanasia and is only permitted to euthanise an animal if the animal is diseased, injured, displays behavioural issues, is of significant age or is unsuitable for sale.

Council will ensure any future partnership with rehoming providers beyond October 2025 includes provisions to avoid unnecessary euthanasia of animals.

Has Council considered the community views on the change?

We acknowledge the concerns raised by the community and will take them into consideration as we move forward. Council has allowed for a 12-month transition period for this change and throughout this process will continue to respond and address the concerns raised by the community.

What if I want to adopt an animal from the Campaspe Shire Council?

No changes to the current Campaspe Animal Shelter operations will be made until October 2025. If you are interested in adopting an animal, please contact the Campaspe Animal Shelter on 5480 3005 to arrange an appointment. A list of current animals available for adoption can be found at www.campaspe.vic.gov.au/Business/Council-businesses/Campaspe-Animal-Shelter/Adopt-an-animal