

The Blue Mountains Animal Care Centre (BMACC) was established on the 5 July 2024. Located at 121 Mort Street Katoomba, the Centre reopened as a Council managed pound for seized and stray cats, dogs and livestock in the Blue Mountains local government area (LGA). The facility can accommodate around 40 cats and 40 dogs.

The service also works in partnership with other LGA's to provide accommodation and care to animals in pounds that are operating at or beyond capacity. A fee for service is charged.

Seized and stray cats and dogs

Where an animal is microchipped and registered, every effort is made to return the animal to the owner, provided that the place of residence is current on the NSW Pet Registry and affords suitable containment. In most other circumstances, the animal will be transported to BMACC for collection by the owner within the prescribed time limits.

The *Companion Animals Management Act* (the Act) provides that identified animals be held for a minimum of 14 days and unidentified animals kept for 7 days. During this time posts of lost animals are published on digital media.

Surrendered animals

BMACC only accepts surrendered animals in exceptional circumstances. Two spaces are allocated with a waiting list in place. Redirection strategies are advised and encouraged such as home to home transfer and outreach assistance. Our aim is to keep animals out of the pound environment. Separation from the home environment can cause pets unnecessary stress and anxiety.

Before a surrender is accepted owners or executors will need to provide evidence of their authority to act. Animals outside the local government area will not be accepted.

Approach to care

Onboarding for animals at the BMACC includes a 7-day quarantine period to guard against the spread of diseases. When an animal is impounded, it is immediately scanned for a microchip and checked for other forms of identification (such as collars, tags, etc., to try and locate their owner) with a letter sent to the last known address of the owner. Steps are then taken to advertise the animal on digital media.

Animals are also assessed by a vet and are vaccinated, with worm and flea treatments given within the first 7 days. A weekly care form is generated. This form is used by volunteers and Animal Care Attendants to progressively record routines and behaviours. These promote a shared understanding of the animal and track how it is settling into centre life.

As part of the approach every animal is microchipped, registered, vaccinated and desexed before they are adopted. Behavioural assessments by a qualified specialist are also completed.

Should all efforts to rehome animals not succeed then individual animals will be cared for until the end of their natural life; or up until ownership is transferred to another rescue or shelter service.

Nutrition, exercise, enrichment and socialisation

Developments in animal welfare science, emphasise the importance of ensuring that standards of care provided to animals in NSW pounds provides positive welfare and aligns with community expectations.

A new enforceable Code of Practice on the care and housing of companion animals is likely. The code is expected to include requirements for exercise yards, housing, quarantine and isolation areas as well as other minimum requirements such as exercise times. In its absence the NSW Animal Welfare Code of Practice No 5 – *Dogs and Cats in Animal Boarding Establishments* serves as the guiding document.