

Support document for the AIAM Position Statement on Animal Management Officer training

Background on urban animal management

Urban animal management involves the control and regulation of pet (companion) animals by Local Government in Australia. It is a Local Government service intended to realise the following two principal goals:

1. Having municipal environments that effectively promote responsible and considerate pet animal ownership.
2. Having municipal environments that effectively minimise public pet nuisance.

Urban animal management involves working with a complex and interactive mix of the following three scientific disciplines:

1. Animal behaviour.
2. Human behaviour, and
3. Community behaviour.

Urban animal management is a community management service that dovetails directly into Local Government's quadruple bottom line of:

1. Community (public health, welfare and amenity)
2. Economy (commercial activity and employment)
3. Environment (wildlife and habitat protection)
4. Governance (transparency and integrity of community service delivery).

Urban animal management is essentially a regulatory service, the principal objective of which is public nuisance minimisation. The regulatory functions involved are routinely supported by the following two essential complementary processes:

1. Public education / awareness,
2. The provision of animal management infrastructure.

Why train AMOs?

Even a brief glance of this above description is enough to provide insight into just how complex, demanding and important this occupational role is. It is far more demanding than most people (including sometimes the employers themselves) realise.

- ⇒ AMOs routinely deal with the public – this may include *angry* people.
- ⇒ AMOs deal with animals – animals that may be *dangerous*.
- ⇒ Animal management can be a *dangerous* and *stressful* occupation in which workplace health and safety issues are a significant factor in day to day activity.

- ⇒ Public health, public safety and community amenity are central to municipal management and these three things are front and centre animal management spheres of influence.
- ⇒ There are considerable risks for both the employee and for the employer if workplace training is not provided, undertaken and kept current.

All employers owe all employees a General Duty of Care in relation to training and education. In the area of Occupational Health and Safety, if during the investigation of a workplace accident, an employer and employee cannot provide evidence of recent, relevant training, they may be held to be in breach of legislative requirements. This liability may not rest entirely with an employing organisation.. In particular circumstances, it may rest with the person/s deemed responsible for having failed to train properly. For example, if an AMO was bitten by a dog and had not received training in animal behaviour, how to recognise the signs of an aggressive dog and what to do in the event of a dog attack, then the employer's supervisor or manager responsible may be held liable.

In many cases employers see training resulting in Qualifications, as a method of managing regulatory compliance risk. (Ridoutt 2005)

The benefits of training

There are three sets of beneficiaries with AMO training:

1. The employee
2. The employer and
3. The community receiving the service.

Research has shown that productivity increases when regular training takes place. Staff members who receive formal training can be 30% more productive than untrained colleagues who are working in the same role. This in turn leads to improving products, services and reputation (Smith A 2009). It is a well documented fact that training increases staff retention, which in turn provides a significant cost saving. Training can also increase the quality and flexibility of a business's service through better customer service, good OH&S practices and improved accuracy and efficiency (Smith A 2009)

Training allows an organisation to better adapt to changing technology, work practices and business strategies. Creating a training culture in an organisation will improve staff morale, communication skills, time management skills, and customer satisfaction.

Training assists an organisation in maintaining licensing and regulatory requirements. Evidence of staff OH&S training must, for example, be provided for investigations of workplace accidents. Staff who receive training are more likely to commit to their employers because of their ability to take on greater responsibility and higher paid work.

Training allows an employee, through obtaining a wider range of skills, to become more flexible within the organisation. Employees become more self directed with improved

communication skills, conscientiousness, creativity and professionalism. Staff who possess diverse skills are generally more positive and satisfied in their jobs and stress levels are reduced, improving productivity (Blandy R 2000). The provision of training demonstrates to a staff member that they are a valued member of the team and that they are getting something more than their wages. The end result is that the organisation develops a training culture where further training is desired and encouraged.

The Australian Qualifications Framework

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is a comprehensive framework which provides for national consistency of all qualifications in post-compulsory education and training – <http://www.aqf.edu.au/>.

Amongst other outcomes, the AQF promotes national and international recognition of qualifications offered in Australia. This means where an officer has obtained qualifications from a National Training package, eg LGA04v2 Local Government, in South Australia (for example), that qualification will be recognised in any other Australian state – this is referred to as a “transportable qualification”.

The AQF also provides for progression through qualifications as a means of assisting with career paths and lifelong learning.

Registered Training Organisations (RTO's)

In order to deliver and assess the National Qualifications a training organisation must pass a rigorous application and registration process whereby they provide evidence that they have the financial backing, the human and physical resources to be able to deliver a particular Qualification. Staff must hold their Certificate IV in Training and Assessment to be able to deliver training and assess a person as competent. They must also have vocational qualifications or extensive experience to the same level or above those they are assessing.

Once registered, in order to maintain registration, the RTO is audited every 3 to 5 years against the Australian Quality Training Framework standards to ensure they are providing quality outcomes to their students.

A list of RTO's can be obtained by visiting the National Training Information Service Website at www.ntis.gov.au.

Training options for AMOs

The *Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation* was specifically designed for the officer who had the majority of their compliance functions in the animal area, focusing mainly on dogs.

The *Certificate IV in Local Government (Regulatory Services)* provides a Qualification for officers who had compliance duties across a wide range of local government areas, with a lower percentage of animal control functions.

AMO's currently have a choice of these two training packages, and which they choose will depend on what proportion of their work is in the animal area. If an AMO is doing less than 30% of animal work then the Certificate IV in Local Government will probably be a better choice.

AMOs can work towards having *dual qualification* involving both Cert IV qualifications. Many of the competencies in the two qualifications are similar and using a process known as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) the AMO could quickly obtain the other qualification once they have obtained the first. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) takes into account the fact that if a person has been working in the industry for several years, they can use relevant knowledge, skills and life experiences to complete competencies which will build to a qualification. Existing qualifications and completion of other courses are also taken into account.

Another factor to consider is where the AMO sees their career progressing to in the future. If they see themselves in local government and possibly progressing to management or into another area such as environment health then the local government qualification may be a better choice. The Certificate IV in Local Government (Regulatory Services) can also be used as a pathway to the Diploma of Local Government and then even further on to University if the officer so desires.

Induction training for AMOs

South Australia legislation currently mandates the provision for induction training of AMOs prior to their employment in this role. This training complements routine Cert IV training as described above. Information on this induction qualification is as follows:

An Ombudsman's enquiry into some areas of local government enforcement in 2008 found that many officers lacked a clear knowledge of the extent of the powers under which they were operating. This situation led to a number of circumstances where officers exceeded their powers or undertook inappropriate enforcement action.

As a result of the Ombudsman's report the South Australian Dog & Cat Management Board developed Professional Development Program for all AMOs in South Australia.

This program requires that:

1. All new AMOs must undertake an on line training module on prior to commencing animal management duties and
2. That within six months of commencing AMO duties, all officers must attend a one day training course on legislation, AMO powers etc and attend a one day course on dog behaviour and management
3. All existing AMOs who have not undertaken certificate IV studies in animal management or local govt. regulation within the past five years must undergo the one day training in AMO duties outlined above.

The above requirements have been circulated to councils as a Dog & Cat Management Board Guideline and the Board will monitor compliance with this requirement as part of its council audit process

Funding arrangements for training AMOs

Councils and corporations should be aware of the various sources of funding available for training. The sources vary with government policies from year to year but should be utilised when available. The rules which apply to funding will differ between the states.

The most consistent source recently has been the traineeship system whereby a Certificate III and IV can be funded from Commonwealth and State funding by signing a contract of training. This is available for both new and existing workers and options should be explored through your Australian Apprenticeship Centre.

If approached, most RTO's will offer all training on a fee for service basis. This is usually the most expensive form of training as it receives no government subsidy. In some states the AMO qualifications may be funded by recurrent state appropriated funding but generally the qualifications need to be identified in the state training profile to receive this subsidy.

The virtual academy

Australia currently *does* have a National Academy for AMO training – it is a virtual one. Australia's *virtual* Academy for AMO training consists of the following three elements:

1. The Australian Qualifications Framework ... under which...
2. A spectrum of RTO's are available across Australia...with...
3. Qualified staff and scope of capability... to...
4. Effectively deliver the qualifications required

The current government's policy is to create a competitive training market whereby all RTO's compete for the training dollar. In many ways, the Federal Government's Skilling Australia for the Future Policy creates a *virtual* academy environment in *preference* to a literal one. By this universal means, the same curriculum can be taught to the same standard anywhere that an RTO is available to do so. Also, any suitably qualified RTO can access the funding to offer this training.

Other Information

- **Productivity Places Program Information:** <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Skills/ProductivityPlaces/Pages/default.aspx>
- **Traineeship information:** <http://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/>
- **National Training Information Website:** <http://www.ntis.gov.au/>
- **AQF framework:** <http://www.aqf.edu.au/>

The big need

AMOs in Local Government across Australia may not have the big numbers of other occupational groups, nor the big voice that goes with those big numbers, but they do have a big need for good and comprehensive training.

References

Blandy R, Dockery M, Hawke A, Webster E (2000) 'Does training pay? Evidence from Australian Enterprises' National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER). Adelaide.

Chandler P.G. (2008) Churchill Fellowship Research: 'An Urban Animal Management Journey Outside the Square' Proceedings AIAM Conference Darwin October 2008.

Smith A, Oczkowski E, Hill M. (2009) 'Reasons for Training: Why Australian employers train their workers' NCVER. Adelaide.

Ridoutt L, Selby Smith C, Hummel K, Cheang C. (2005) 'What value do employers give to qualifications' NCVER. Adelaide.

Rudd K PM, Swan W, Smith S, Wong P (2007): 'Skilling Australia for the Future - Policy Document' Australian Labour Party. Canberra.

Appendix 1

Registered Training Organisations who have the scope to deliver the Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation.

The scope of their registration is indicated in brackets after the name.

Provet Pty Ltd Trading as Animal Industries Resource Centre (National)
<http://www.provetlearning.com.au/>

Em-Four Pty Ltd. Rouse Hill NSW (National)
<http://www.emfour.com.au/>

Victoria university (Victoria only)
<https://vuwebapps01.vu.edu.au/handbook/Search.aspx?CourseID=30586/>

Warner Group. Pty Ltd trading as Warner institute of Business (Victoria only)
<http://www.warnergroupp.com.au/wiob3.html>

North Melbourne Institute of Technology (Victoria only)
http://www.nmit.vic.edu.au/courses/certificate_iv_in_animal_control_and_regulation

TAFESA Veterinary and Applied Science Centre (South Australia Only)
Contact david.jones@tafesa.edu.au

University of Queensland (Gatton Campus) (Queensland Only)

Appendix 2

LGA40504 – Certificate IV in Local Government (Regulatory Services)

Total number of units required: 12

Common Pool Units

Select a minimum of four units from the common pool.

UNIT CODE	UNIT TITLE
LGACORE102B	Follow defined OHS policies and procedures
LGACORE104B	Work effectively in local government
LGACORE105B	Work with others in local government
LGACORE501B	Provide quality and timely advice to council
LGACORE601B	Develop, implement and review operational plans
LGACORE602B	Promote and facilitate organisational performance
LGACORE603B	Represent council's role and value in the community
LGACOM403B	Conduct public educational presentations
LGACOM404B	Establish cooperative arrangements with other organisations
LGACOM405B	Implement and monitor the organisation's OHS policies, procedures and programs within the work group or section
LGACOM407B	Manage finances within a budget
LGACOM501B	Develop and organise public education programs
LGACOM502B	Devise and conduct community consultations
LGACOM503B	Prepare a budget
LGACOM602B	Coordinate and facilitate a change process
LGACOM603B	Develop, implement and review policies and procedures
LGAGOVA410B	Monitor council procedures to ensure compliance with relevant legislation
LGACOMP024A	Develop community relations
LGACOMP025A	Manage a local government project
LGACOMP026A	Provide team leadership

Plus...

Select a minimum of five units from this specialist regulatory services pool.

UNIT CODE	UNIT TITLE
LGACOM406A	Investigate alleged breaches of legislation and prepare documentation
LGACOM408A	Represent council at legal proceedings
LGAEHRR203B	Monitor public behaviour in council areas
LGAEHRR303B	Monitor areas under council jurisdiction
LGAEHRR304B	Operate council pound facilities
LGAREGS402A	Provide evidence in court
LGAREGS404A	Undertake appointed animal control duties and responsibilities

Plus...

Select a maximum of three elective units from any section of the Local Government Training Package or from any other endorsed Training Package, while ensuring the integrity of the AQF level. No more than three elective units may be imported.

No more than one elective unit may be drawn from an AQF level below or above the AQF level of this qualification.

Appendix 3

RUV40104 Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation

The Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation is the industry qualification for persons undertaking animal control and regulatory functions. It is highly recommended that whilst undertaking this qualification, the learner should have access to an animal control and regulation workplace through either paid employment or a period of work placement or work experience.

A total of 14 units of competency must be completed:

- undertake all 10 core units from Group A below
- select 2 additional units from Group B below
- select 2 additional units from Groups B and / or C below.

GROUP A	
RUV4101A	Implement and monitor the organisation's OHS program
RUV4201A	Comply with animal control and regulation requirements
RUV4202A	Assess and impound animals
RUV4203A	Identify and respond to animal behaviour
RUV4204A	Manage conflict situations within an animal control and regulation environment
RUV4206A	Carry out pound procedures
RUV4209A	Prepare and present animal control and regulation case
PSPREG404B	Investigate non-compliance with legislation
PSPREG405A	Act on non-compliance with legislation
BSBCMN305A	Organise workplace information

GROUP B	
RUV4205A	Euthanase sick, injured or unwanted pound animals
RUV4207A	Conduct community awareness programs
RUV4208A	Coordinate seizure of animals
LGAEHRR304A	Operate and maintain council pound facilities
LGAPLEM405A	Provide assistance in carrying out building inspections
PSPGOV404A	Develop and implement work unit plans
PSPPM401A	Develop a project
RTD2101A	Apply animal trapping techniques
RTD4402A	Define the pest problem
RTD4406A	Implement a pest management action plan

GROUP C	
This group includes other units of competency from RUV04 Animal Care and Management Training Package and / or other endorsed Training Packages including Business Services, Information Technology, Local Government, Public Services Regulation and Transport.	
Units selected as part of Group C must be aligned to qualifications at AQF level 3, 4 or 5 and must be relevant to work undertaken in the Animal Control and Regulation sector.	