

AIAM Position Statement on Disaster Planning in Urban Animal Management

The Australian Institute of Animal Management recommends that animals are included in local and state emergency plans.

The negative consequences of not considering animal management issues in planning for disaster situations have been seen throughout the world.

Population evacuations in the face of emergency threats will always involve animals.

- People will often refuse to leave their pets behind - and that adds a whole extra dimension to planning that is sometimes not given adequate consideration.
- Restoring animal owner links in the aftermath of evacuation is an important aspect of social recovery and return to normalcy.

Legislation governing animal management throughout Australia prohibits animals being a nuisance, wandering at large or endangering the public and require registers of companion animals be maintained to link these animals and their owners. All of these circumstances occur in disaster emergencies and Animal Management Officers are expected to deal with them (emergency or not).

The supporting document has a flexible regional/local emphasis that encourages animal management officers to be *actively* engaged in the emergency and disaster response planning that will involve them. It provides a checklist for reviewing the currency of resource availability, inter agency agreements and chain of command protocols that are relevant to animal management staff involvement in the event of an emergency situation.

The 2008 proceedings document with its associated links provides reference material and other resources for Emergency Managers and Animal Management Officers. This position statement¹ is linked to a more complete paper on this subject that was presented as part of the program at the 2008 conference. It will ensure that the needs of both urban animals and livestock are considered in emergency management planning.

¹ The Australian Institute of Animal Management (AIAM) endorsed this position statement at the time of the Darwin AIAM conference in October, 2008.