

## HARDSHIP PROCEDURE – REDUCTION OR WAIVING OF PUBLIC FEES

Under the provisions of Section 61OE (1) of the Local Government Act 1993 No 30, City of Newcastle Council may waive payment of, or reduce, a Public Fee (whether expressed as an actual or a maximum amount) in certain limited circumstances. Council must be satisfied that the case falls within a category for which Council has determined payment should be so waived or reduced. Council assesses applications for a reduction or waiving of fees on a case by case basis.

Owners of impounded companion animals requesting Council to waive or reduce fees should be advised by RSPCA of the following procedure.

1. An owner of a companion animal can make an application to council to have the Public fees associated with the impounding and shelter of their animal reduced or waived in accordance to with the Local Government Act 1993.
2. Any application for a reduction or waiver of Public fees must be submitted in writing (by email or letter) addressed to **'The Manager – Transport and Compliance – City of Newcastle'**.
3. RSPCA employees should advise owners of impounded animals seeking a waiver or reduction of public fees to contact City of Newcastle Customer service on 02 4974 2000.

The following information must be provided by the owner wishing to apply for a reduction or waiver of public fees:

- The circumstances of the how the animal came to be impounded
  - Why they seek impound fees to be waived or reduces
  - Confirmation of identification (Drivers Licence, Photo Card, Birth Certificate)
  - The employment Status of the owner
  - Source and amount of income received by the owner per week
  - Centrelink statement or pensioner card to prove government payments if they receive funding from the government
  - Microchip number or RSPCA Tag number
  - Name, breed and colour of animal
4. Where an application is received for a waiver or reduction of Public Fees, Council will suspend the accumulation of any further fees associated with the impound, or shelter of the animal, from the date the written application from the owner is received and for the period in which the application is assessed.
  5. Council will consult with RSPCA to identify the exact amount of the outstanding public fees prior to making the determination.
  6. Manager of Transport and Compliance is delegated to make determination on the application for a waiver of reduction of public fees.

7. Council will advise the owner and RSPCA in writing as to councils' decision regarding an application for a reduction or waiving of public fees as soon as approvals have been made.
8. All correspondence in relation to the application to reduce or waive public fees must be recorded in P&R (property and Rating) system.
9. If council agrees to waive or reduce public fees due to owner's financial hardship, then the owner must collect the animal within in 24 hours of the decision.
10. Where an application for a reduction or waiving of public fees is not supported and the owner does not claim the animal, the animal will then go into the care of the RSPCA and processed for adoption if seen fit by RSPCA.
11. All public fees reduced or waived by council are to be recorded in the 'Transport and Compliance - Rangers - Hardship public fee waiver'. This is sent to the Finance business partner at the end of each month.