



## Humane Animal Rescue Behavioural Euthanasia Policy

**Objective:** To establish clear guidelines and procedures for making euthanasia decisions for rescued animals in our care, ensuring that euthanasia is considered only as a last resort and under specific circumstances where it is deemed the most humane and compassionate option for the animal's well-being.

**Policy statement:** Euthanasia of rescued animals in our care will only be considered under the following conditions: if the animal has been in our care for over three months, is in a suitable foster home environment, has been on behavioural medication for a minimum of three months, and both a behavioural veterinarian and behavioural trainer recommend euthanasia as the most appropriate and humane outcome for the animal.

### Guidelines:

1. **Time in care:** Rescued animals must have been in our care for over three months before euthanasia is considered. This time frame allows for adequate assessment, rehabilitation efforts, and attempts to address any behavioural issues through training and medication.
2. **Foster home suitability:** Animals being considered for euthanasia must be placed in a suitable foster home environment where they have received consistent care, attention, and socialization. The foster home must provide a safe and stable environment for the animal to thrive. If the animal is showing signs of behavioural distress, we always need to consider if the environment is a factor and change the foster home in an effort to support the animal.
3. **Behavioural Medication:** Animals must have been on behavioural medication for a minimum of three months, as prescribed by a qualified veterinarian, to address any underlying behavioural issues. This duration allows for sufficient time to assess the effectiveness of the medication and its impact on the animal's behaviour.
4. **Recommendation by experts:** Euthanasia will only be considered if both the behavioural veterinarian and behavioural trainer agree that it is the most humane and compassionate option for the animal's well-being. Their recommendation must be based on thorough assessment, evaluation of the animal's quality of life, and consideration of all available options for rehabilitation and rehoming.

5. **Ethics consideration:** Euthanasia decisions will be guided by ethical principles, prioritising the best interests of the animal while considering the organisation's resources and capacity to provide ongoing care and support. Every effort will be made to explore alternative options, such as specialised behavioural rehabilitation programs or placement with experienced adopters, before euthanasia is considered.

**Implementation:** This policy will be communicated to all staff members, volunteers and foster caregivers involved in the care and decision-making process for rescued animals. It will be integrated into our standard operating procedures and reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with ethical standards and the welfare of the animals in our care.

By adhering to this policy, our organisation is committed to upholding the highest standards of care and compassion for rescued animals, ensuring that euthanasia is considered only as a last resort and in circumstances where it is truly in the animal's best interests.