

## **Change of ownership policy including animals missing, stolen or in an ownership dispute**

### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to outline AAR's standard change of ownership process and where an animal's profile is marked as missing or stolen or where there is an ownership dispute.

### **2. Definitions**

This policy uses the following terms:

- a. 'registered owner' means the person or company who is the primary carer of the animal who feeds and cares for the animal each day and where the animal normally lives.
- b. 'alternate contact' means a person or company who has been nominated by the Owner as a secondary contact in the case that the Owner is unable to be contacted on the information provided.

### **3. Transfer process**

Animal registered on AAR's database:

- a. Change of ownership form to be completed in full with current registered owner's signature and submitted to AAR via email, fax or post.
- b. If current registered owner's signature cannot be obtained, AAR will contact the current owner in writing and advise them of the transfer request.
- c. The current owner has 14 days to notify AAR if there are any issues with the change of ownership request. If no response received, AAR will complete the transfer.

### **4. Missing, Stolen or Ownership Dispute**

- 4.1 Where a change of ownership request has been received for an animal that has been flagged as missing or stolen by the registered owner, AAR will do the following:
  - a. AAR will contact the registered owner by phone to confirm the status. If the registered owner is uncontactable, AAR will call the alternate contact in order to get in touch with the registered owner.
  - b. If contact cannot be made, AAR will write to the registered owner to advise them of the transfer request. The current owner has 14 days to notify AAR if there are any issues with the change of ownership request. If no response received, AAR will complete the transfer.
  - c. If the registered owner declines the transfer, the registration will remain unchanged. The person requesting the transfer will be notified in writing that their transfer request has been declined. This now becomes a civil matter and will need to be resolved between the relevant parties or via the courts.
- 4.2. Where a change of ownership request has been received for an animal where the record shows there is an ownership dispute, AAR will do the following, unless an order of a court of VCAT has been received by AAR.
  - a. AAR will contact the registered owner by phone to determine if the dispute is ongoing.
  - b. If the dispute has been resolved, AAR will complete the transfer.
  - c. If the dispute remains unresolved, AAR will not amend the record to change the ownership of the animal.
  - d. Ownership disputes are a civil matter and will need to be resolved between the parties or via the courts.

Note: The AAR database is not a register of proprietary ownership.