

Keeping of Animals Local Law 2026

Proposed Changes and Why They Matter

The City of Cockburn has been reviewing its local laws, with the aim of renewing and aligning with best practice.

The purpose of a keeping of animals local law is to further control dogs, cats, and other animals, to protect the health and amenity of the community.

The keeping of animals is currently regulated by Part II of the City's Consolidated Local Laws. Part II and Schedule 1 of the Consolidated Local Laws will be repealed on adoption of the proposed City of Cockburn Keeping of Animals Local Law 2026.

When it comes to local laws relating to dogs and cats, the City's powers are constrained by section 51 of the Dog Act 1976 and section 79(3) of the Cat Act 2011.

The key changes are:

Section	Amendment	Reason
Dogs	Introducing a power for the City to direct a person to provide a suitable enclosure for a dog (i.e. yard is fenced suitably to keep a dog contained).	Improve safety for dog owners, dogs and neighbourhoods.
	Standardisation of application process to keep more than two dogs.	To improve clarity, consistency, and provide greater transparency.
	Changes to the application process to keep more than two dogs.	To improve clarity, consistency, and provide greater transparency.
	Standardisation of the application process for a kennel establishment.	To improve clarity, consistency, and provide greater transparency.
	Changes to the application process for kennel establishments.	To improve clarity, consistency, and provide greater transparency.
	Removal of an explicit clause dealing with construction requirements for kennels.	These will be applied as conditions and/or through any building approvals process.
	Removal of a number of redundant clauses.	Already provided under the City's general competency powers or in the Dog Act 1976 or associated Regulations.
	Standardising enforcement rules.	To improve clarity, consistency, and provide greater transparency.

Section	Amendment	Reason
Cats	Adding a clause banning cat nuisances.	To protect the amenity of the community.
	Introduction of cat prohibited areas, which are set out in a Schedule.	To protect City owned or managed conservation areas, bushland reserves, and regional parks.
	Separating out multiple cat approvals from cattery approvals.	To improve clarity of the local law.
	Adding an application process to keep more than three cats.	To improve clarity, consistency, and provide greater transparency.
	Changes to the application process for catteries.	To improve clarity, consistency, and provide greater transparency.
	Removal of an explicit clause dealing with construction requirements for catteries.	These will be applied as conditions and/or through any building approvals process.
	Standardising enforcement rules.	To improve clarity, consistency, and provide greater transparency.
	Review of the modified penalties to align with the three-tier approach.	To ensure the modified penalties better reflect the seriousness of the offence, and to also create the ability for the City to issue larger infringements for repeat offenders.
Other animals	Adding a clause banning the keeping of animals in a way that creates a nuisance.	To protect the amenity of the community.
	Changes to the requirements to do with drainage.	To improve clarity and make it easier to comply.
	Adding a clause banning the slaughter of animals unless at a premises approved for that purpose.	To protect the amenity of the community.
	Change to clause dealing with dead animals.	To improve clarity and make it easier to comply.
	Removal of clauses to do with stables.	Horses are included in the definition of 'livestock' so the mandatory requirements would apply. No need to regulate stables any further than what these clauses provide. Any issues can be dealt with via the proposed nuisances clause.
	Removal of the clause to do with requiring a manure receptacle.	This clause is very prescriptive and any issues could be dealt with via the proposed nuisances clause.
	Standardising enforcement rules.	To improve clarity, consistency, and provide greater transparency.

Section	Amendment	Reason
Other animals (continued)	Review of the modified penalties to align with the three-tier approach.	To ensure the modified penalties better reflect the seriousness of the offence, and to also create the ability for the City to issue larger infringements for repeat offenders.
Livestock Complete re-think of the livestock provisions.	Removal of the clause to do with impounding of livestock. The proposed clauses provide that livestock (including miniature horses, goats, sheep, cows etc.) can only be kept in accordance with the requirements of the local law or in accordance with a development approval (DA): To keep livestock for domestic purposes/ as pets, the following requirements must be met: • Only allowed in resource, rural and rural living zones • No more than 2 • 9m setback from adjoining premises, throughfare or public place (this in effect replaces the minimum lot sizes) • For miniature animals (goats, cows, horses, sheep) – only specific breeds permitted. The proposed clauses do not require registration of any livestock kept for domestic purposes/pets with the City.	The City already has these powers under the Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations 1996. To improve clarity, reduce duplication of approvals required, and make it easier to comply. To reduce regulatory burden on the community and the City.
Poultry Complete re-think of the poultry provisions.	The new proposed clauses largely mirror the approach taken for livestock in that they can only be kept in accordance with the requirements of the local law or in accordance with a DA: • A DA would only apply in the circumstances of a hobby farm/ intensive husbandry and commercial activities • The local law operates where poultry is to be kept for purely domestic purposes or as pets. To keep poultry for domestic purposes/ as pets, the following requirements must be met: • Only allowed in residential, resource, rural and rural living zones	To improve clarity, reduce duplication of approvals required, and make it easier to comply.

Section	Amendment	Reason
Poultry (continued)	- Limits based on lot sizes with a max of 30 for lots with an area greater than 5,001m² (see proposed local law for table) - The poultry must not cause a nuisance.	
	The proposed clauses remove any requirements to do with the construction and size of any enclosure.	The City feels these requirements are very prescriptive and not something the City wants to regulate via a local law.
Pigeons Complete re-think of the pigeon provisions.	There is no longer a requirement to apply for a certificate of registration. Rather, a person simply needs to apply for a permit to keep more than 20 pigeons. A person can only apply for approval if they are a current financial member of a recognised incorporated racing pigeon body or they are a registered pigeon fancier.	To improve clarity, reduce duplication of approvals required, and make it easier to comply.
	Merging of the 'duties of certificate holder' and 'cage, enclosure or loft requirements' clauses to simply provide the following conditions on keeping pigeons: - That they are kept in an enclosure constructed in accordance with the Code of Practice which is securely fastened - That the enclosure is setback 5m from adjoining dwelling and 9m from thoroughfares and public places - That feed is kept in vermin-proof containers - That they do not cause a nuisance - That pigeons may only be exercised outside of a residential zone, and only during the hours set out in the Code of Practice.	To improve clarity and make it easier to comply.
	Standardisation of the application process to keep more than 20 pigeons.	To improve clarity, consistency, and provide greater transparency.
	Changes to the application process to keep more than 20 pigeons.	To improve clarity, consistency, and provide greater transparency.
	Introduction of clause explicitly providing that approvals cannot be transferred.	To improve clarity, consistency, and provide greater transparency.

Section	Amendment	Reason
Bees	Restricting the application of the requirements to do with bees to European honey bees only (<i>Apis mellifera</i>).	The current requirements apply to all bees when it is European honey bees which are the causes of most nuisances.
	Providing that European honey bees may only be kept on land zoned residential, resource, rural or rural living.	To improve clarity, reduce duplication of approvals required, and make it easier to comply.
	Providing for the following mandatory requirements to be able to keep European honey bees: • That only up to two hives may be kept • That the person is a registered beekeeper (unless exempted by State legislation) • That the bees are kept in accordance with the WA Apiarists' Society Best Practice Guidelines for Urban Beekeepers • That a good and sufficient supply of water on the premises is provided • That the beehives are setback at least 5m from adjoining premises and at least 9m from a thoroughfare or public place • That flight paths do not affect adjoining premises • That the bees do not cause a nuisance.	To protect the amenity of the community.

Please visit the [Proposed Keeping of Animals Local Law 2026 'Comment on Cockburn' page](#) for a copy of the complete [proposed new City of Cockburn Keeping of Animals Local Law 2026](#).



While local governments have the ability to make local laws under the Local Government Act 1995, there are limits to this power. Any local law must be fair, reasonable, and proportionate. It should be necessary for the good government of the district. Local laws cannot conflict with State legislation, and they shouldn't introduce major new policies or big changes to existing policies. That is the role of State Government.