



Department of  
Primary Industries

Animal Research Review Panel Guideline 27

## **Research Animal Rehoming Guidelines**

For establishments and individuals involved in the care and use of animals for research and teaching in NSW

[www.dpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au)

**Published by the NSW Department of Primary Industries**

Research animal rehoming guidelines: For establishments and individuals involved in the care and use of animals for research and teaching in NSW

Updated February 2024

First published December 2020

ISBN number

**More information**

Department of Primary Industries / Animal Welfare / Orange

**[www.dpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au)**

**Acknowledgments**

The Animal Research Review Panel (ARRP) has provided significant input to content in developing this document.

INT20/385542

---

© State of New South Wales through Regional NSW 2024. The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (February 2024). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that the information upon which they rely is up to date and to check the currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the Department of Regional NSW or the user's independent adviser.

---

## Foreword

The NSW Government is committed to protecting the welfare of animals used in research and is safeguarding the future of these animals so that, where possible, they are able to find life-long homes.

Animals that are of sound physical and mental health at the conclusion of their use in research should have provisions made for their future care, where it is in the best interests of the animal and public safety.

These voluntary Guidelines are designed for everyone involved in the use of animals for recognised research purposes to provide guidance on the rehoming of animals used for scientific purposes. They have been developed in accordance with the *Animal Research Act 1985*, and the underpinning regulations, and the Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes (the Australian Code).

Successful rehoming requires a coordinated and cooperative approach, and it is important that research establishments, rehoming organisations, animal welfare organisations and veterinarians work together to achieve an appropriate outcome for animals at the end of their use in research.

People responsible for animals have a duty to provide for their welfare, in line with the best available science and community expectations. By adhering to these voluntary Guidelines, people involved in animal research can demonstrate their concern for the welfare of the animals in their care, and contribute to improving outcomes for animals in NSW.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' followed by 'K Phillips'.

Prof. Jacqueline K Phillips BVSc (Hons) PhD

Chair

Animal Research Review Panel

## Contents

Foreword.....	2
Introduction.....	5
The use of animals in research.....	5
Rehoming research animals.....	6
Part 1 – General.....	7
1. Scope .....	7
2. Purpose .....	8
Part 2 – Accredited research establishments and researchers.....	9
3. Responsibilities.....	9
4. Record keeping.....	10
5. Written policies and procedures .....	10
5.1 Rehoming policy.....	11
5.2 Procedure for the preparation of animals .....	12
5.3 Procedure for the selection of animals.....	12
5.4 Procedure for rehoming.....	13
Part 3 – Animal management .....	14
6. Supervision.....	14
7. Preparation.....	14
8. Selection.....	14
9. Health and Behaviour.....	16
Part 4 – Rehoming.....	17
10. Rehoming Organisations.....	17
11. Consideration of conditions at new home .....	18
12. Transfer of ownership.....	18
13. Information and advice .....	19
14. Guarantees and Agreements .....	20
15. Transportation .....	20
Part 5 – Post rehoming.....	22
16. Contingency measures for placement failure.....	22
Part 6 – Special requirements of animals.....	23
17. Dogs and Cats .....	23
18. Livestock .....	24

19. Pocket pets (rabbits, rats, mice, guinea pigs & ferrets) ..... 24

20. Aquatic species..... 24

21. Birds..... 25

22. Reptiles and amphibians ..... 25

Definitions ..... 26

List of abbreviations ..... 28

Appendix A..... 29

Appendix B1 ..... 30

Appendix B2 ..... 31

Appendix C..... 32

Appendix D ..... 33

Appendix E ..... 34

References ..... 36

# Introduction

This document provides information about rehoming animals at the completion of their time in research and teaching and supports the Australian Code.

These Guidelines support research establishments, individuals and rehoming facilities to improve animal welfare outcomes, by guiding the development of responsible rehoming practices to optimise rehoming success.

There is an international move towards rehoming animals used for scientific purposes and this document has been developed to support this trend.

The Australian Code allows for various provisions for animals at the conclusion of their use, including rehoming. There are significant benefits to both research establishments and the broader community in making provisions for rehoming. These benefits include:

- demonstration of a commitment to sustainable and ethical policies for animal rehoming and welfare that reflect stakeholder and community values
- an increase in options available for people seeking to adopt animals as pets
- reduced risk of harm to animals and to the community
- a reduction in the number of animals humanely killed at the conclusion of their use in research.

These Guidelines have been developed by the Animal Research Review Panel (ARRP). Adherence to these Guidelines is voluntary. However, the rehoming of cats and dogs kept for research by accredited research establishments and the holders of animal research authorities is now mandatory. This was introduced via the Animal Research Amendment (Right to Release) Bill 2022 to amend the Animal Research Act 1985 (the Act), which came into effect on 25 November 2022. Part 6A of the Act outlines the requirements for the mandatory rehoming of cats and dogs kept for research.

The purpose of these Guidelines is to guide researchers and Animal Ethics Committees (AECs), when planning to remove, rehabilitate and rehome animals from research establishments for long-term placement in suitably matched homes.

## The use of animals in research

In New South Wales the use of animals for research and teaching is regulated by the Act. The Act sets out the stringent requirements which protect the welfare of animals used in research and teaching.

The Act, together with the Animal Research Regulation 2021 (the Regulation), prescribe the Australian Code; a nationally accepted document which is revised periodically to take into account changes in technology and society's views. The purpose of the Australian Code is to promote the ethical, humane and responsible care and use of animals for scientific purposes.

The Australian Code establishes AECs to ensure that animal use is justified and that the principles of the 3Rs (replacement, reduction and refinement) are adhered to.

## Rehoming research animals

Animals may only be rehomed at the conclusion of their use in research, science and teaching, with the approval of and in accordance with the conditions set out by the approving AEC.

The Australian Code states that opportunities to rehome animals should be considered wherever possible, especially when the impact of the project or activity on the wellbeing of the animal has been minimal and their physiological condition and behavioural attributes indicate that they can be introduced to a new environment with minimal, transient impact on their wellbeing (see Sections 1, 2 and 3 of the Australian Code).

### Note

The Australian Code provides the following:

3.4.1 Provisions for animals at the conclusion of their use must be made promptly and in accordance with the animal ethics committee (AEC) approval. Provisions may include:

- (i) rehousing (rehoming) (see Clauses 3.4.2–3.4.3)
- (ii) return to normal husbandry conditions or natural habitat (see Clauses 3.4.4–3.4.5)
- (iii) humane killing (see Clauses 3.3.45–3.3.46)
- (iv) reuse (see Clauses 1.22, 1.24 and 2.3.15)
- (v) tissue sharing (see Clauses 1.26, 2.4.24 and 2.5.10).

3.4.2 Opportunities to rehome animals should be considered wherever possible, especially when the impact of the project or activity on the wellbeing of the animal has been minimal and their physiological condition and behavioural attributes indicate that they can be introduced to a new environment with minimal, transient impact on their wellbeing.

3.4.3 An animal must not be rehomed to a person at the conclusion of their use unless:

- (i) the AEC has approved such release;
- (ii) safeguards are in place and approved by the AEC to ensure the ongoing wellbeing of the animal. In the case of primary and secondary level students, safeguards must include a written commitment from a parent or guardian for the provision of adequate, ongoing and responsible care of the animal, and demonstrating an awareness of relevant legislative requirements regarding the animal being rehomed;
- (iii) transport of animals between sites is in accordance with Clauses 3.2.5–3.2.8.

3.4.4 The return of animals to normal husbandry conditions and the release of wildlife to their natural habitat must be in accordance with current best practice.

3.4.5 If release of wildlife animals is permitted, such release must comply with Clause 3.3.39.

# Part 1 – General

## 1. Scope

- 1) These Guidelines should be used by accredited research establishments and individuals involved in the care and use of animals for research and teaching.
- 2) These Guidelines may also be used by animal welfare organisations, rescue groups, native animal keeper groups and individuals that have an interest in rehoming animals that have been used in research and teaching.
- 3) These Guidelines predominantly relate to domestic animal species.
- 4) These Guidelines may also be used for rehoming non-domestic (exotic) and native animals, provided relevant licencing requirements are met. These Guidelines do not apply to native animals appropriate for release or translocation.
- 5) Where possible, animals should be rehomed to private homes, depending on the species.
- 6) Where relevant licensing requirements are met, animals may also be rehomed to an animal display establishment where it is in the best interests of the welfare of the animal.
- 7) These Guidelines are to be used in conjunction with all other relevant existing legislation, standards and NSW Department of Primary Industries policies including:
  - (a) *Animal Research Act 1985*
  - (b) *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979*
  - (c) *Exhibited Animals Protection Act 1986*
  - (d) *Companion Animals Act 1998*
  - (e) *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*
  - (f) *Biosecurity Act 2015*

### Note

The *Exhibited Animals Protection Act 1986* governs exhibitors so that they provide the required standards of care, presentation and safety. Under the legislation, NSW DPI must issue an authority (permit, licence or approval) before animals can be exhibited. The licensing scheme details steps exhibitors must take to house and care for their animals.



**Note**

A biodiversity conservation licence is required under Part 2 of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* for the private keeping of native animals, and for any activity that would result in harm, dealing in (including possession) or liberation of native animals. The NSW Environment, Energy and Science (EES) has authority for licensing in relation to protected and threatened species and may refuse or restrict any proposal to rehome native animals.

Rehoming native animals to private homes must be limited to species on the animal species keeper list located at <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/nsw-native-animal-keepers-species-list>

A list of non-native terrestrial vertebrate species can be accessed from Schedule 3 of the *Biosecurity Act 2015* (the Act). Species listed in Part 2, Division 1 and Part 3 of Schedule 3 to the Act are considered to be 'prohibited dealings'. It is an offence to keep, move or otherwise deal with these animals unless the dealing is permitted by NSW DPI. Species listed in Division 2 of Schedule 3 to the Act are non-native species that are usually kept as domestic pets, livestock or are already widespread pests and therefore, are not considered to be 'prohibited dealings'.

## 2. Purpose

- 1) These voluntary Guidelines support accredited research establishments, individuals and rehoming organisations to improve animal welfare outcomes, by guiding the development of responsible rehoming practices to optimise rehoming success. The guidelines cover a range of areas including:
  - (a) researcher and research establishment responsibilities
  - (b) animal mental and physical wellbeing
  - (c) public safety and satisfaction.

## Part 2 – Accredited research establishments and researchers

### 3. Responsibilities

- 1) Accredited research establishments and researchers must comply with all relevant legislation and the Australian Code before undertaking rehoming.
- 2) The role of an accredited research establishment or researcher is to develop and implement a rehoming program with appropriate policies and procedures to place animals in appropriate long-term homes. Once rehomed, the care and welfare of an animal becomes the responsibility of the new owner.
- 3) In making application to an AEC for a project, researchers must provide information on the intended fate of animals if approved to be used in research. Where rehoming is an option, this should be addressed in the AEC application.
- 4) Accredited research establishments and researchers should consider opportunities to rehome animals wherever possible, especially when the impact of the project or activity on the wellbeing of the animal has been minimal and their physiological condition and behavioural attributes indicate that the animal can be introduced to a new environment with minimal, transient impact on their wellbeing.
- 5) Accredited research establishments should develop a **rehoming program** and elect a suitably qualified and experienced staff member (such as an animal attendant or animal welfare officer) to be a rehoming coordinator to lead the program. A summary of factors to consider in an effective rehoming program can be found at Appendix C.
- 6) Accredited research establishments and researchers should only rehome animals to persons aged 18 and over.
- 7) Accredited research establishments and researchers should ensure that where required, registration of animals and legal transfer of ownership is conducted before physical transfer.
- 8) No animals are to be released into the wild, unless as part of an approved research project.
- 9) With respect to native animals, accredited research establishments and researchers should seek advice from NSW Environment, Energy and Science about Biodiversity Conservation licences for scientific research, and the completion of relevant licence checks before rehoming.

#### Note

Clause 3.4.3 of the Australian Code provides that an accredited research establishment must not rehome an animal at the conclusion of its use unless:

- (a) the relevant AEC has approved the rehoming
- (b) safeguards are in place and approved by the AEC to ensure the ongoing wellbeing of the animal.

## 4. Record keeping

- 1) Accredited research establishments and researchers must ensure compliance with annual reporting requirements under the Act.
- 2) Appropriate records in relation to research and rehoming should be kept by an accredited research establishment and researcher, including:
  - (a) animal identification including date of birth, date of arrival at the establishment, where sourced from, and date of rehoming
  - (b) veterinary and research history
  - (c) individual animal behavioural observations
  - (d) behavioural and medical assessment prior to rehoming
  - (e) fate of the animal at the conclusion of research
  - (f) details of the new owner or rehoming agency
  - (g) details of any post rehoming contact from the new owner
  - (h) details of failed rehoming attempts

### Note

The Animal Research Regulation 2021 requires that where domestic cats or domestic dogs have been used, the fate of animals must be reported annually as per the fate reporting classifications in Form L: Animal use statistics.

Accredited research establishments and researchers should seek advice from NSW EES about administration and record keeping requirements of native protected species under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*.

## 5. Written policies and procedures

- 1) Accredited research establishments and researchers should develop organisational policies and procedures to use as a guide for a rehoming program, including:
  - (a) a rehoming policy
  - (b) a procedure for the preparation of animals for rehoming
  - (c) a procedure for selection of animals for rehoming
  - (d) a procedure for rehoming.
- 2) Organisational policies and procedures for rehoming should be regularly reviewed every 3 years.
- 3) Where native animals are used in research, rehoming policies and procedures should include input from NSW EES.

## 5.1 Rehoming policy

- 1) The purpose of a rehoming policy should be to facilitate the effective and successful transition of animals from an accredited research establishment or researcher, to new owners, with minimal stress placed on an animal.
- 2) A rehoming policy should give consideration to the long term quality of life of an animal and to optimising the safety and satisfaction of the public.
- 3) Accredited research establishments and researchers are encouraged to develop a rehoming policy in consultation with their approving AEC.
- 4) A rehoming policy should include:
  - (a) when animals should and should not be considered for rehoming
  - (b) the conditions under which legal ownership of animals will be transferred to a new owner
  - (c) how available animals will be advertised for adoption and potential new owners sourced, including whether animals are transferred directly to a new owner or to a third party organisation (such as an animal welfare organisation or rescue group)
  - (d) how a research establishment or researcher meets compliance with Part 6A of the Act (the mandatory rehoming of cats and dogs) and relevant parts of the Australian Code - specifically clauses 3.4.2; 3.4.3; 4.14
  - (e) any contractual or adoption agreements required
  - (f) alternative options for animals deemed not suitable for rehoming
  - (g) contingency measures for unsuccessful adoptions or when a suitable home cannot be found within a reasonable timeframe.
- 5) The rehoming policy should identify situations when rehoming is not a suitable option, such as:
  - (a) when a research project requires animals to be humanely killed in order to provide essential information (e.g. by post mortem)
  - (b) when laws and regulations prohibit rehoming, for reasons including risks to public health or biosecurity, or when native species cannot be kept as pets
  - (c) when an AEC and a registered veterinary practitioner have good reason to believe that rehoming would not be in an animal's best interest, with consideration given to the quality of life and life expectancy of the animal, including instances where the cumulative impact from use could have negative welfare outcomes for an animal
  - (d) when the behaviour of an animal indicates that it may pose a risk to public safety.
- 6) Animals that may not be considered suitable for rehoming include:
  - (a) animals that are genetically modified
  - (b) animals with chronic health conditions requiring ongoing, complex or costly management or causing unmanageable discomfort or distress, unless the animal is able to maintain a good quality of life with a suitable owner

- (c) animals that have unmanageable behaviour problems that are unable to be adequately addressed through rehabilitation
- (d) animals that have been treated with a substance (e.g. drugs, chemicals, infectious agents, some implanted devices) that could potentially pose a health risk to the animal, other animals, their new owners and the community or the environment
- (e) animals considered to be prohibited dealings under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*
- (f) animals protected under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*.

## 5.2 Procedure for the preparation of animals

- 1) The purpose of a procedure for the preparation of animals for rehoming should be to outline programs of **socialisation, habituation, environmental enrichment** and training that are undertaken in parallel to research and are likely to increase the success of rehoming.
- 2) The socialisation program should habituate animals to the research environment but should also increase the ability of animals to adapt to other novel experiences they will encounter in their new homes.

### Note

Programs of socialisation, habituation and training not only make animals more suitable for rehoming, but also lower stress responses in animals faced with novel situations, such as visitors to a research establishment or experimental procedures. Examples of preparing animals in the laboratory for new homes may be to provide litter trays to cats and rabbits and habituate horses to having the hoofs lifted and handled.

## 5.3 Procedure for the selection of animals

- 1) The purpose of a procedure for the selection of animals for rehoming should be to:
  - (a) describe a process to be followed to give animals time to recover in a suitable environment prior to a final assessment for rehoming, if research housing conditions and procedures are likely to impact an animal's physical or mental health
  - (b) describe selection criteria and a process to be followed when selecting animals for rehoming (see Part 3 clause 8(3))
  - (c) outline the process of obtaining AEC approval for rehoming.
- 2) An effective animal selection procedure should include:
  - (a) a health assessment of animals undertaken by a veterinary practitioner
  - (b) a behavioural assessment of animals undertaken by a person that is familiar with the individual animal and the species typical behaviour. A behavioural assessment may include a species appropriate behaviour evaluation test. However, in light of the limited scientific validation of such tests and the temporal and contextual influences on behaviour, observations during engagement in routine activities with animals over the period of their care should be used to inform the assessment of behaviour.

- (c) identification of animals that are not deemed immediately suitable for rehoming, but may be suitable for future rehoming after rehabilitation activities.

## 5.4 Procedure for rehoming

- 1) The purpose of a procedure for rehoming animals should be to:
  - (a) describe how animals will be promoted for rehoming and prospective owners sought and whether this will be through collaboration with a **rehoming organisation** or animal keeper group
  - (b) describe criteria to be used and a process to be followed when considering placement of animals with prospective new owners
  - (c) define the information that will be provided to new owners regarding their responsibilities and the animals' husbandry needs and care
  - (d) define the process for transferring ownership of animals to a new owner
- 2) An effective rehoming procedure should include arrangements for:
  - (a) legal transfer of ownership
  - (b) payment for an animal by a new owner, where appropriate
  - (c) physical transfer of an animal to a new owner, including payment of transport, if applicable.

### Note

Helpful guidance is available from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) (International) through its publication, 'Guidelines for the design and management of animal shelters', available online.

In regard to standards of housing and care of other species, animal care organisations are advised to reference the guidelines for scientific institutions for a range of species including mice, rats, rabbits and guinea pigs. These guidelines are issued by ARRPP and are available online at <https://www.animaletics.org.au/policies-and-guidelines>.

## Part 3 – Animal management

### 6. Supervision

- 1) Accredited research establishment staff and researchers should familiarise themselves with species specific behaviours, including normal and abnormal behaviours and behavioural indicators of negative and positive mental states.
- 2) Accredited research establishment staff should make a record of individual animal behavioural observations throughout the period of their care, to be used when assessing the suitability of animals for rehoming.

### 7. Preparation

- 1) Care and management of animals in a research establishment should be designed with rehoming in mind. Husbandry and handling throughout the research project should aim to prepare animals for rehoming, and rehoming should be considered as early as possible.
- 2) The rehoming coordinator should ensure that the preparation of animals for rehoming includes activities aimed at socialisation, habituation and basic training (e.g. toileting) of animals. The use of positive reinforcement for habituation and training is recommended.
- 3) Animals should receive adequate socialisation early in their lives during the sensitive period of development. If there is scope to do so, they should be introduced as juveniles to many different visual, tactile and aural stimuli particularly those associated with future rehoming environments.
- 4) Animals should receive all applicable routine prophylactic treatments, including vaccination and parasite control.
- 5) Where possible and suitable for the species, research establishments and researchers should arrange to have animals identified and desexed prior to rehoming, or place animals on long-term contraception.

### 8. Selection

- 1) All animals should be considered for the possibility of rehoming, when it is in the best interests of the animal to do so and when it poses no danger to public safety or animal health, or to the environment.
- 2) All efforts should be made to rehome animals that will be able to have a good quality of life.
- 3) Selection criteria should give regard to:
  - (a) the age of the animal

- (b) the health status of the animal, including any disease or injury requiring long term management or causing chronic discomfort or distress that will impact quality of life
- (c) previous procedures or existing conditions that may impact on the animals ability to experience a good quality of life
- (d) evidence of mental illness, including behavioural indicators of anxiety and aggression
- (e) a temperament consistent with sociability with humans and other animals
- 4) An animal's health, behaviour and temperament should be considered in matching it with the most suitable owner.
- 5) Animal species that should be considered for rehoming include, but are not limited to:
  - (a) dogs\*
  - (b) cats\*
  - (c) rabbits
  - (d) guinea pigs
  - (e) ferrets
  - (f) birds
  - (g) rats and mice
  - (h) livestock, including, horses, cattle, sheep, goats, alpacas and pigs
  - (i) reptiles
  - (j) amphibians
  - (k) fish

*\*The rehoming of cats and dogs kept for research by accredited research establishments and the holders of animal research authorities is now mandatory under Part 6A of the Animal Research Act 1985.*

- 6) Animals that should be considered appropriate candidates for rehoming include those:
  - (a) where research has had minimal lasting impact on the animal's wellbeing
  - (b) that are excess breeding stock
  - (c) not used for research as the research did not commence
  - (d) animals used for breeding or training that are due for 'retirement'.
  - (e) livestock held for sufficient time for drug residue concerns to be addressed as informed by all available drug residue data for the species
- 7) Temporary foster care may be considered for animals that require rehabilitation prior to selection for rehoming, including those with known vices such as excessive vocalisation or fence jumping (dogs), or for those that require specialised care such as pregnant and unweaned animals.



- 8) A final assessment of animals should be undertaken after animals have been given time to recover in a suitable environment, following conclusion of their use in research, that provides for the normal behaviours for the species.
- 9) Animals determined to have manageable health conditions or permanent disabilities may still be rehomed provided that:
  - (a) the animal has undergone a health check by a veterinary practitioner
  - (b) the animal is capable of maintaining a good quality of life
  - (c) a veterinary treatment plan has been prepared describing the condition and the requirements for care, including anticipated associated costs
  - (d) the veterinary treatment plan and issues are fully disclosed to a prospective owner
  - (e) the establishment believes that the prospective owner is able to meet the needs, both current and future, of the animal
  - (f) a veterinary treatment plan has been prepared with estimated ongoing costs and fully disclosed to prospective owners.

## 9. Health and Behaviour

- 1) Before rehoming, animals should receive at least one veterinary examination, to assess the fitness and health of the animal.
- 2) Health assessments should also consider:
  - (a) species-specific behaviours, including undesirable or abnormal behaviours
  - (b) behaviour management and rehabilitation
  - (c) a determination on the suitability of the animal for rehoming and the type of home or owner it would best be suited to.

## Part 4 – Rehoming

### 10. Rehoming Organisations

- 1) Accredited research establishments and researchers may utilise animal rehoming facilities, animal welfare organisations, rescue groups and individuals to assist in rehoming animals.
- 2) This may be advisable where there are significant numbers of animals requiring rehoming at one time, which often occurs at the conclusion of a research project; or where there are not sufficient internal resources to coordinate the rehoming task.
- 3) Where rehoming directly to a new owner is not possible, accredited research establishments and researchers are encouraged to foster relationships with rehoming organisations with experience, well established rehoming practices and a good public following.
- 4) Accredited research establishments and researchers are encouraged to conduct a site visit of any potential rehoming organisation, before engaging them to rehome animals.
- 5) When considering outsourcing, it is recommended that research establishments and researchers consider a number of criteria in relation to external rehoming organisations, which may include:
  - (a) the experience of the organisation in rehoming animals and its ability to cater for the needs of the species being rehomed
  - (b) the governance and principles of the organisation
  - (c) the capacity of the organisation to take responsibility for the animals
  - (d) the ability of the organisation to sufficiently network and identify prospective new owners for the animals
  - (e) the organisation's compliance with relevant regulations and best practice in animal care
  - (f) the willingness of the organisation to work with the research establishment or researcher in providing rehabilitation and socialisation for animals where required
  - (g) the exchange of a rehoming agreement for all animals transferred to the ownership of the external organisation
  - (h) transparent communication in relation to the animals' history, age and current health status, and follow-up information on the animals' wellbeing in their new home.
- 6) Rehoming facilities, animal welfare organisations, rescue groups and individuals that rehome animals are encouraged to follow these guidelines.
- 7) Rehoming is considered to be complete following physical transfer of the animal.

## 11. Consideration of conditions at new home

- 1) Accredited research establishments and researchers should implement policies to ensure that prospective new owners are matched to suitable animals, in accordance with the rehoming procedure (see Part 2 clause 5.3).
- 2) Before rehoming an animal, accredited research establishments and researchers should consider prospective new owners and be satisfied, to the best of their ability, that the prospective new owner is able to meet the needs, both current and future, of the animal. More information on what to consider can be found at Appendix A.
- 3) Where possible, prospective new owners should be given the opportunity to meet the animal that is being rehomed, in an area where it is possible for them to bring any existing pets owned (e.g. dogs or cats) to assess the compatibility of the animals.
- 4) Before rehoming an animal, the following criteria should be used to consider the placement of animals with prospective new owners:
  - (a) the number of animals already owned by the prospective new owner so as to avoid hoarding of animals
  - (b) the capacity of the prospective new owner to care for the animal, and provide it with a good quality of life
  - (c) the prospective new owner's experience in handling animals and the animal's size and temperament
  - (d) the prospective new owner's property and facilities available to accommodate the species.

## 12. Transfer of ownership

- 1) Accredited research establishments and researchers should ensure that no animal suspected of being sick, injured or physically or mentally diseased is rehomed, unless on the written advice of a veterinary practitioner that the animal is suitable for rehoming and with full disclosure to the new owner.
- 2) Accredited research establishments and researchers should develop a contingency plan or advice in the event that a new owner notifies them of a desire to relinquish ownership and care of an animal.
- 3) New owners should be provided with a supply of feed to ease dietary change, and any of the animal's familiar items (e.g. toys), where there are no disease transmission risks and it is appropriate for the species.

**Note**

In NSW, all cats and dogs, other than exempt cats and dogs, must be microchipped by 12 weeks of age or before being sold or given away, whichever happens first.

All cats and dogs, other than exempt cats and dogs, must be registered by six months of age.

Native species can only be kept under a Biodiversity Conservation licence, and must be reported in a native animal keeper record book.

### 13. Information and advice

- 1) At the time of rehoming an animal, a new owner should receive accurate written information, including a veterinary treatment plan where appropriate, about the care of the animal, at no charge.
- 2) General information that should be provided to a new owner includes, but is not limited to:
  - (a) general care requirements of the species, including appropriate diet and feeding regimes
  - (b) usual life span of the breed or species
  - (c) best practice requirements for shelter and accommodation
  - (d) best practice requirements for the security of the animal
  - (e) best practice requirements for social contact with humans and other animals of the same species
  - (f) best practice methods on how to transition an animal to a new environment
  - (g) how to identify and appropriately manage common physical and mental diseases
  - (h) procedures for seeking emergency veterinary treatment for the animal, and the value of establishing a relationship with a veterinary practitioner
  - (i) the estimated costs associated with providing food and shelter for the animal
  - (j) routine veterinary treatment which may be required for the animal, for example vaccination and parasite control
  - (k) maximum time an animal be left unattended, recognising the needs of the animal
  - (l) the expected normal behaviours of the species or breed, such as vocalisation, messy or destructive behaviour (birds), rooting (pigs) or grazing (ruminants)
  - (m) information about the legal requirements for ownership, and the penalties for non-compliance
  - (n) the benefits of desexing animals, where applicable
  - (o) minimum requirements for exercise
  - (p) costs associated with registering an animal, (dog or cat)

- (q) other information which is reasonable that the new owner should be made aware of.

#### Note

Expected behaviours for a species or breed may include digging, scratching, or vocalisation.

## 14. Guarantees and Agreements

- 1) Accredited research establishments and researchers are encouraged to exchange a rehoming agreement with new owners, when rehoming directly to them.
- 2) Accredited research establishments and researchers are encouraged to exchange a rehoming agreement with organisations when rehoming to an animal welfare organisation, rescue group or exhibitor.
- 3) Adoption agreements should address issues including:
  - (a) expected ongoing care and welfare of an animal
  - (b) the requirement that animals are not to be used for research purposes
  - (c) the requirement that animals are not to be used for breeding
  - (d) the requirement that animals are not to be abandoned and any arrangements for trial periods or rehoming failure
  - (e) protections against claims of injury, disease or future ill health of an animal
  - (f) information privacy protections, whereby neither the recipient of an animal, nor accredited research establishment employees or associates will disclose confidential information. This prohibition may extend to non-disclosure of the identity of the accredited research establishment itself and/or the nature of the research being carried out.

#### Note

Fair trading regulations exist in relation to the sale of products or services. For more information visit [www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/buying-products-and-services/guarantees,-contracts-and-warranties](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/buying-products-and-services/guarantees,-contracts-and-warranties)

## 15. Transportation

- 1) An accredited research establishment should assess animals prior to any intended journey to determine that they are fit for travel.
- 2) During the transportation of animals to or from an accredited research establishment, the person in charge of the animals should:

- (a) prevent injury, harm or distress, by ensuring species that may be distressed by the presence of another species are visually and physically separated, and incompatible animals of the same species are separated
  - (b) monitor the condition of the animals and take any necessary action to protect them from injury, harm or distress
  - (c) where possible, every two hours, provide all dogs and cats with an opportunity to drink water, stretch, urinate and defecate.
- 3) The person in charge should ensure that transport methods and arrangements are appropriate to the species and circumstances.
- 4) The person in charge should ensure that containers used for transporting animals:
- (a) are of a size that enables animals to lie down flat, turn around, stand erect and stretch with adequate clearance, where appropriate to the species
  - (b) are made of robust material, are escape-proof and sufficiently able to be secured.
- 5) The person in charge should ensure that containers and vehicles used regularly by a researcher or the establishment for the purpose of transporting animals to or from the establishment:
- (a) have adequate ventilation, shade, and temperature control sufficient to avoid harm and distress
  - (b) are designed to protect animals from injury through being free from protrusions or sharp edges in the carrying area
  - (c) are designed to protect animals from injury by having non-slip floors
  - (d) protect against unauthorised release or escape of animals
  - (e) provide sufficient light to enable an animal to be inspected during the journey
  - (f) are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after use to minimise the risk of the transmission of infectious disease between consignments of animals.

**Note**

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Land Transport of Livestock) Standards 2013 No2 outlines the principles that everyone involved in livestock transport must use to protect the welfare of the animals in their care. Livestock includes alpacas, buffalo, camels, cattle, deer, emus, goats, horses, ostriches, pigs, poultry and sheep.

## Part 5 – Post rehoming

### 16. Contingency measures for placement failure

- 1) Where feasible and practical, accredited research establishments, researchers and rehoming organisations are encouraged to implement strategies to reduce and address rehoming failures. Measures may include:
  - (a) continued communication and follow-up activities post rehoming to assess the success of their rehoming program and animal placement
  - (b) offering prospective new owners a trial period within which they would consider return of the animal, in the case of rehoming failure
  - (c) working with the new owner to establish a suitable agreed outcome that is in the best interests of the animal, in the event a new owner is contemplating relinquishment of an animal
- 2) Contingency measures may give regard to biosecurity protocols that are in place at an accredited research establishment.

## Part 6 – Special requirements of animals

### 17. Dogs and Cats

Authorised persons (being accredited research establishments and animal research authority holders) must take all reasonable steps to rehome cats and dogs kept for use in animal research in accordance with Part 6A of the Act. Authorised persons must take all reasonable steps to prepare cats and dogs for rehoming during the time they are kept for use in research. Steps to prepare cats and dogs for rehoming include the following:

- 1) Efforts must be made during the course of a research project to provide dogs and cats with appropriate socialisation with other cats/dogs and people, habituation and training. See Appendix B for a range of socialisation and enrichment activities for dogs and cats.
- 2) Dogs and cats should be taught skills required as a companion animal, such as lead walking and outdoor toilet training for dogs and litter training for cats.
- 3) When selecting prospective homes for dogs, consider that, as a social species, most will enjoy the company of another dog.
- 4) Before rehoming, dogs and cats should have:
  - (a) a general health examination by a veterinary practitioner, and in the case of dogs, a heartworm test
  - (b) dogs and cats should receive core vaccinations; for dogs a C3 vaccination (parvovirus, distemper, hepatitis) and cats a F3 vaccination (feline panleucopenia, feline herpesvirus, feline calicivirus) or as advised by a veterinary practitioner or consistent with rehoming organisation policies
  - (c) a dental assessment, and treatment if required
  - (d) prophylactic treatment for internal parasites
  - (e) preventative treatment for external parasites.
- 5) It is strongly recommended that dogs and cats be desexed before rehoming.

#### Note

The person in charge of research establishment must comply with the *Companion Animals Act 1998* in relation to notification and identification information and registration information for dogs and cats in NSW.

The person in charge should familiarise themselves with relevant state and territory regulations regarding the identification, registration and sale of dogs and cats being sold interstate.



## 18. Livestock

- 1) Accredited research establishments and researchers are encouraged to consider rehoming livestock including sheep, cattle, goats, pigs, alpacas and horses, following their use for research purposes.
- 2) Before rehoming, livestock animals should be:
  - (a) identified using appropriate means
  - (b) receive vaccinations and parasite control as appropriate for the species
  - (c) health checked for endemic diseases which may not be apparent.

### Note

When rehoming many livestock species (cattle, sheep and pigs), the properties of new owners require a registered Property Identification Code (PIC) and animals must be fitted with a National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) tag in order to transport them from one property to another. Records of movement of cattle, sheep, goats and pigs to their new home must be recorded as required by the *NSW Biosecurity (National Livestock Identification System) Regulation 2017*.

## 19. Pocket pets (rabbits, rats, mice, guinea pigs & ferrets)

- 1) In the case of rabbits, rats, mice, guinea pigs and ferrets, the accredited research establishment should conduct behavioural assessments and observations during handling prior to rehoming. More information on temperament testing for rats and mice can be found in Appendix D and E.
- 2) While it is a matter for accredited research establishments, researchers and new owners to negotiate, it is recommended that rabbits be desexed prior to rehoming.
- 3) Before rehoming, animals should be individually identified using an appropriate means for the species, such as tattoo, microchip or non-toxic marker. This is particularly important for animals housed in groups in order to identify individual animals.
- 4) It is strongly recommended that rodents and rabbits be rehomed in compatible desexed pairs or small groups.

## 20. Aquatic species

- 1) Before rehoming aquatic species, accredited research establishments should consider the general requirements of each species (such as whether the species should be housed indoor or outdoor and if it is a tropical or temperate species) and whether potential new owners have adequate skills and expertise to take care of the species, and are able to provide the appropriate type, size and adequately equipped holding tanks or ponds for the species.

- 2) In addition, due to the possibility of aquatic species being released, potential new owners should also be made aware of the following document: *A Strategic Approach to the Management of Ornamental Fish in Australia*.

## 21. Birds

- 1) In the case of birds, the accredited research establishment should conduct behavioural assessments and observations during handling prior to rehoming.
- 2) Birds, in particular parrots, should be closely monitored for signs of adverse mental health prior to rehoming, which may include:
  - (a) feather plucking
  - (b) excessive vocalisation
  - (c) heightened aggression
  - (d) other stereotypies such as head bobbing or bouncing

## 22. Reptiles and amphibians

- 1) Before rehoming reptiles and amphibians, accredited research establishments should consider the general requirements of each species and whether potential new owners have adequate skills and expertise to take care of the species, and are able to provide the appropriate type, size and adequately equipped holding tanks for the species.
- 2) Before rehoming, reptiles and amphibians should be identified using an appropriate means (such as by the implantation of a microchip where appropriate to the species).

# Definitions

**accredited research establishment** means a corporation which is accredited as a research establishment under section 20 of the Animal Research Act (1985), and may include but not be limited to:

- (a) universities
- (b) medical research institutes
- (c) government departments and agencies
- (d) primary and secondary educators
- (e) industrial and pharmaceutical companies
- (f) medical equipment suppliers
- (g) agricultural and animal health companies
- (h) conservation organisations
- (i) professional services firms.

**animal** means a member of a vertebrate species including any:

- (a) amphibian
- (b) bird
- (c) mammal (other than a human)
- (d) fish
- (e) reptile.

**environmental enrichment** means the provision of appropriate activities or experiences within an animal's environment to meet that animal's physical and mental needs

**habituation** is a form of learning that enables acclimatisation to new stimuli. Innate response to a stimulus decreases after repeated or prolonged presentations of that stimulus.

**owner** includes a joint owner, and has the same meaning as **person in charge**.

**person in charge** in relation to an animal, includes:

- (a) the owner of the animal
- (b) a person who has the animal in the person's possession or custody, or under the person's care, control or supervision
- (c) any servant or agent of the owner of the animal, that servant or agent, as the case may be.

**rehoming** means the movement of an animal to a new home. It does not mean the following:

- (a) moving an animal to a farm for production purposes, or to an abattoir
- (b) moving an animal from one research establishment to another research establishment.

**rehoming organisation** means an animal rehoming facility, animal welfare organisation, rescue group, or animal keeper group that undertakes rehoming activities

**rehoming program** is a set of activities underpinned by policies and procedure designed to successfully rehome animals. It should encompass the following considerations:

- (a) preparation of animals for rehoming
- (b) selection of suitable animals
- (c) placement of animals with appropriate new owners and homes
- (d) advice to be provided to prospective owners
- (e) administration and record keeping requirements
- (f) rehoming pathways for native protected species not on the NSW Native Animal Keepers Species list
- (g) follow up post rehoming
- (h) evaluation of the program.

**release** means to set an animal free, returning it to its natural habitat in the wild, without human control.

**research** means "**animal research**", as defined in the *Animal Research Act 1985* section 3.

**sale** means the transfer of ownership of an animal or animals, and includes:

- (a) selling by wholesale, retail, auction or tender
- (b) barter or exchange
- (c) supplying for profit
- (d) offering for sale, receiving for sale or exposing for sale
- (e) consigning or delivering for sale
- (f) having in possession for sale
- (g) causing or allowing any of the above to be done.

**socialisation** means the process by which animals learn to relate to humans and other animals. Exposure to a variety of people and animals designed to promote comfort in their close proximity and avoid fear.

## List of abbreviations

AEC	Animal Ethics Committee
ARA	<i>Animal Research Act 1985</i>
ARRP	Animal Research Review Panel
The Australian Code	Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes
NHMRC	National Health & Medical Research Council
NSW EES	NSW Environment, Energy and Science
POCTA	<i>Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979</i>

# Appendix A

## Questionnaire to assist in determining the suitability of prospective owners

This simple questionnaire is intended to be used by accredited research establishments, researchers, rescue groups and rehoming organisations, when considering the suitability of a prospective animal owner. Responses to questions are voluntary, and should be answered where relevant to the species being rehomed.

### **Facilities**

1. What type of premises do you live in?  
☐ House   ☐ Unit / apartment   ☐ Acreage
2. Is your premises fully fenced?  
☐ Yes   ☐ No
3. Are you able to provide appropriate housing for the animal?  
☐ Yes   ☐ No

### **Work and lifestyle**

4. How would you describe your working hours?  
☐ Full time   ☐ Part time   ☐ Flexible   ☐ Home office
5. How would you describe your physical activity levels?  
☐ Very active   ☐ Somewhat active   ☐ Inactive
6. With consideration of your work and lifestyle, do you believe you are able to provide the animal with a good quality of life, with adequate time for exercise, socialisation, grooming, training and attention?  
☐ Yes   ☐ No

### **Finance**

7. Do you have financial ability to provide ongoing care and any future veterinary care required?  
☐ Yes   ☐ No

### **Experience**

8. Have you owned an animal before? ☐ Yes   ☐ No
- 8a. If yes, what type of animal? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Have you owned this species of animal before? ☐ Yes   ☐ No
10. Do you currently own any animals? ☐ Yes   ☐ No
- 10a. If yes, what species and how many?  
 Species 1: \_\_\_\_\_ #: \_\_\_\_\_ Species 2: \_\_\_\_\_ #: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Do you consider yourself to be experienced in the care and husbandry of this species?  
☐ Yes   ☐ No

# Appendix B1

## Appendix 1 Socialisation and enrichment for dogs and cats

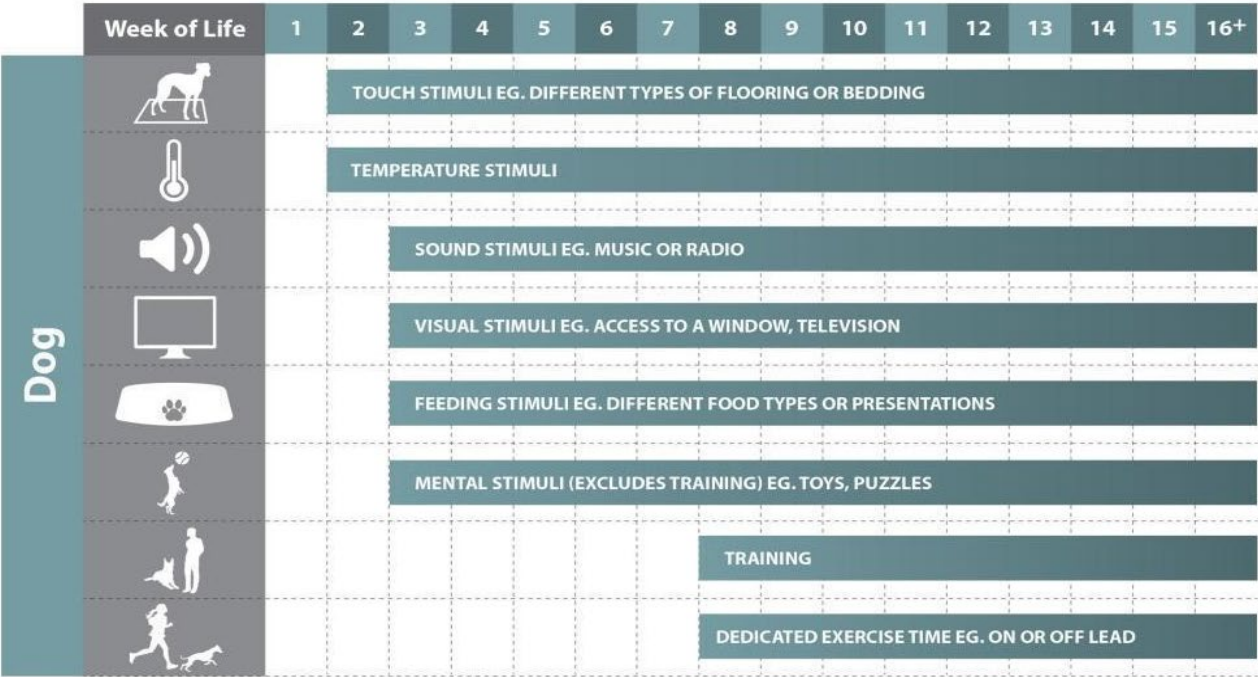


\*Animals of appropriate temperament and vaccination/disease status

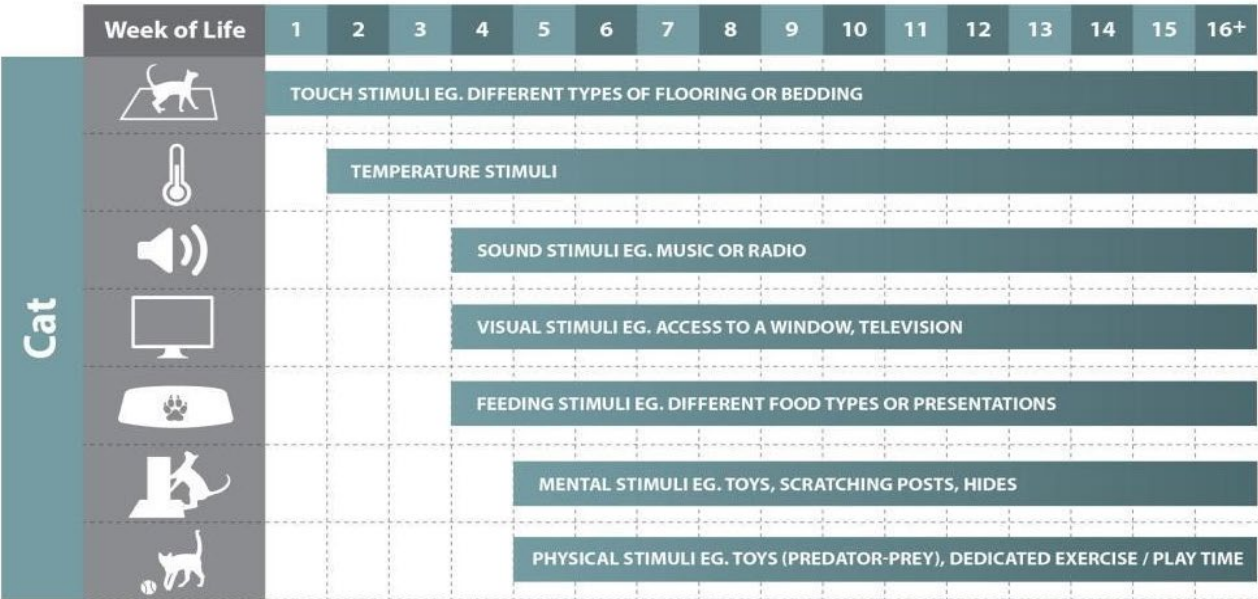


Appendix B2

Enrichment



All enrichment types on a rotating basis

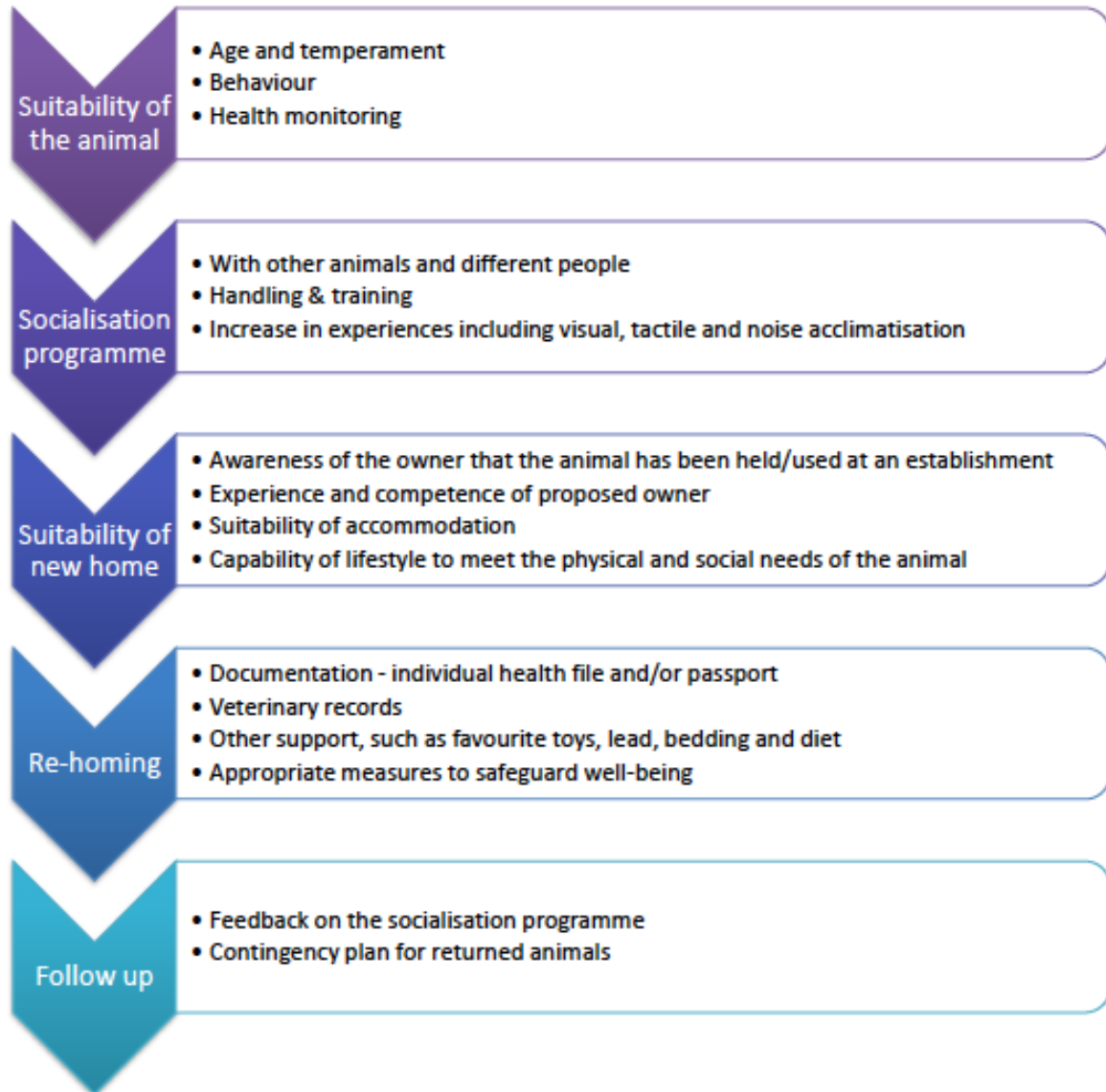


Source: NSW Department of Primary Industries



# Appendix C

## Factors to consider in an effective rehoming program



Source: The UK Home Office, Animals in Science Regulation Unit, Advice Note: 03/2015, Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 Re-homing and Setting Free of Animals (2015).

# Appendix D

Mouse temperament testing tool

Perform all tests in a neutral area. Place a tick in the relevant column below.

Inside the cage

	Yes	No	Notes
Does the mouse approach your hand?			
Does the mouse allow you to touch it?			
Does the mouse allow you to scoop it up?			
Does the mouse attempt to bite?			
Does the mouse vocalise when touched?			

When being handled for 10 minutes

Is the mouse happy to sit on your palm?			
Does the mouse enjoy being stroked?			
Does the mouse self-groom when handled?			
Will the mouse eat a food treat from your hand?			
Does the mouse attempt to bite?			
Does the mouse vocalise when handled?			

Source: reproduced with permission of Carlee Mottley, experienced animal facility technician.

# Appendix E

Rat temperament testing tool		
Perform all tests in a neutral area. Place a tick in the relevant column below.		
Inside the cage		
Yes	No	Notes
		Does the rat approach the cage door?
		Does the rat approach your hand?
		Does the rat allow you to touch it?
		Does the rat allow you to catch it?
		Does the rat attempt to bite?
		Does the rat vocalise when touched?
		Does the rat try to run away?
		Does the rat have porphyrin staining?
When being handled for 10 minutes		
		Is the rat happy to sit in the crook of your arm?
		Does the rat enjoy being stroked or tickled?
		Does the rat self-groom when handled?
		Does the rat follow your hand?
		Will the rat eat a food treat from your hand?
		Does the rat enjoy a belly rub?
		Does the rat brux?* (tooth chatter and eye boggle)

When held, does the rat attempt to break free?

Does the rat attempt to bite?

Does the rat vocalise when handled?

\* Care should be taken when interpreting this behaviour as it is ambiguous what mental state the behaviour represents in all circumstances.

Source: reproduced with permission of Carlee Mottley, experienced animal facility technician.

## References

Laboratory Animal Science Association, *LASA Guidance on the rehoming of Laboratory dogs*, <http://www.lasa.co.uk/PDF/LASA%20Guidance%20on%20the%20Rehoming%20of%20Laboratory%20Dogs.pdf>

NSW Native Animal Keepers Species list, <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/nsw-native-animal-keepers-species-list>

Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, *Guidelines for the design and management of animal shelters*, <http://www.icam-coalition.org/downloads/Shelter%20guidelines.pdf>

The UK Home Office, Animals in Science Regulation Unit, Advice Note: 03/2015, Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 Re-homing and Setting Free of Animals (2015).