Operational policy
Visitor Management

Approval to take a live animal into a protected area

Operational policies provide a framework for consistent application and interpretation of legislation and for the management of non-legislative matters by the Department of Environment and Science. Operational policies are not intended to be applied inflexibly in all circumstances. Individual circumstances may require a modified application of policy.

Purpose

Under the Nature Conservation (Protected Areas Management) Regulation 2006 (PAM Regulation), written approval from the chief executive is generally required for a person to take a live animal into a protected area or keep a live animal in a protected area.

Background

Animals brought into protected areas can cause a range of impacts and issues, including:

- soil erosion and biophysical impacts due to browsing and trampling of vegetation and soils;
- spread of weed seeds by their becoming attached to the animal, or spread in manure and fodder;
- introduction of additional nutrients, disease and pathogens to water and land;
- behavioural impacts on native animals;
- predation of, or competition with, native animals;
- introduction of genetic material to native animal populations;
- adverse effects on amenity and conflicts with other park user groups;
- increased management costs to service specialised animal-based forms of recreation; and
- increased safety risks.

Written approval from the chief executive

Section 124(1) of the PAM Regulation states that a person requires the chief executive’s written approval to bring a live animal into, or keep a live animal in, a protected area. However, section 124(2) specifies circumstances when such written approval is not required, which are:

- where a permit to graze, muster, or travel stock on a protected area has been issued;
- if the animal is a support dog (a ‘support dog’ means an assistance dog, guide dog, hearing dog or trainee support dog under Schedule 4 of the Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009);
- if the animal is a fish or mud crab lawfully taken in the area or adjacent area, or an invertebrate animal lawfully taken in the area or adjacent area for use as bait for fishing;
- where horse riding is permitted under a regulatory notice and the horse is brought into the park in accordance with the notice; or
where bringing a dog into the park is permitted under a regulatory notice and the dog is brought into the park in accordance with the notice.

**Determination**

The chief executive may also give approval to bring a live animal into a protected area, or keep a live animal in a protected area, in certain other circumstances, as set out below.

1. The chief executive may give written approval to bring a live animal into, or keep a live animal in, a national park:
   - where the animal is essential to assist a person who suffers from an illness or impairment. In such circumstances, evidence of the illness or impairment must be provided by a relevant medical practitioner (refer to Operational Policy – Assistance animals in QPWS managed areas);
   - where the Bicentennial National Trail (BNT) crosses a national park, meaning horse riders need to traverse the national park while using the BNT; and/or
   - in exceptional circumstances, such as search and rescue or police operations where the animal is needed to assist.

2. The chief executive may give written approval to bring a live animal into, or keep a live animal in, a regional park if all of the following apply:
   - the use is consistent with the management intent;
   - the animal is kept under the applicant’s control at all times;
   - the impacts on the natural and cultural resources of the area are acceptable and can be adequately managed;
   - the proposed use is not likely to create an unsafe or unhealthy environment for park visitors or QPWS staff; and
   - the use is unlikely to interfere with other visitors, authorised users, or QPWS management activities.

3. The chief executive may give specific ‘one-off’ approvals to bring a live animal into a protected area where circumstances warrant and potential impacts are minimal. Such approval must be given specific consideration by the chief executive and may not be delegated.

**Reference material**

*Operational policy – Domestic animals kept by staff in protected areas*

*Operational policy – Assistance animals in QPWS managed areas*

**Disclaimer:**

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Approved by

Ben Klaassen

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Signature

31 January 2017

Date

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