

A Guide to Keeping Poultry and Other Birds



Why have Guidelines for keeping poultry and other birds?

Many residents keep birds as companions, while others keep poultry for fresh eggs or as a hobby. These guidelines have been written to assist birdkeepers and to prevent this activity causing problems.

Poultry keeping in particular can cause offense to neighbours, for example when:

- Birds are kept in wet and dirty conditions;
- Poor quality or the lack of an enclosure allows birds to roam;
- Kitchen scraps are used as feed as this can attract rats and mice;
- Droppings are allowed to accumulate causing odours.

Poultry shelter and aviary construction

A well constructed poultry shelter or aviary helps to minimise the above problems. The key points are:

- The structure should be made of sound materials, (eg timber, wire netting and sheet metal) so that it is rat proof, weather proof and allows good ventilation. Sheet metal (or other material) surrounding the framework should extend at least 200 mm below ground level and 400 mm above ground level, to prevent access by rodents;
- It should be at least 1.5 metres in height;
- The internal floor surface should be smooth, hard and impervious to moisture to allow for cleaning, and should be laid at least 100 mm above the surrounding ground level. Concrete is recommended;
- Each bird should have a minimum floor space of 0.4m²;
- All birds should be kept in the enclosure at all times so that they do not create a nuisance.

It is also important to ensure that due consideration is given to the location of the poultry shelter so that neighbours are not affected by noise or odour. The following minimum set-back distances are given as a guide:

- 1 metre from any property boundary;
- 1.5 metres from any other structure, (eg sheds, pergolas or carports);
- 15 metres (or 10 metres if 12 or less birds are kept) from any street, road, dwelling, shop, factory, public building or other place used by people for living or working.

Feeding

Food and water left for animals and birds can attract rats and mice, therefore it must be kept in vermin proof containers. These are readily available through hardware and farm suppliers.

It is also important to remember to keep bulk storage of food in vermin proof containers



Disposal of wastes

Animal and bird enclosures must be kept in a clean and sanitary condition at all times. Droppings need to be cleaned out regularly and either buried, or in the case of poultry manure, may be composted for use as mulch or soil conditioner. Any dropped food needs to be removed or returned to the vermin proof feed container.

The Deep Litter Method

By adopting this method a soft surface is provided for the fowls to scratch. Using this method correctly will ensure that your fowls will always be on dry ground and odour is controlled. There will be little, if anything to attract flies and fowl droppings will quickly dry and form part of the litter.

Starting the litter:

Use dry materials only, such as straw or wood shavings, and spread it to a depth of about 150 mm on the floor surface. Add a further layer several weeks later, and repeat this until the litter is built up to about 250 mm. You can even add lawn clippings occasionally.

Caring for the litter:

Keep the litter dry at all times. For this reason, the fowls' drinking water should be placed outside the shelter. Cut a hole through the shelter wall to allow your fowl to drink. Rake the litter occasionally and encourage the fowls to scratch amongst the litter by throwing some wheat under the perches. Any wet litter should be removed. Wet food should never be thrown on the litter.

Fly control

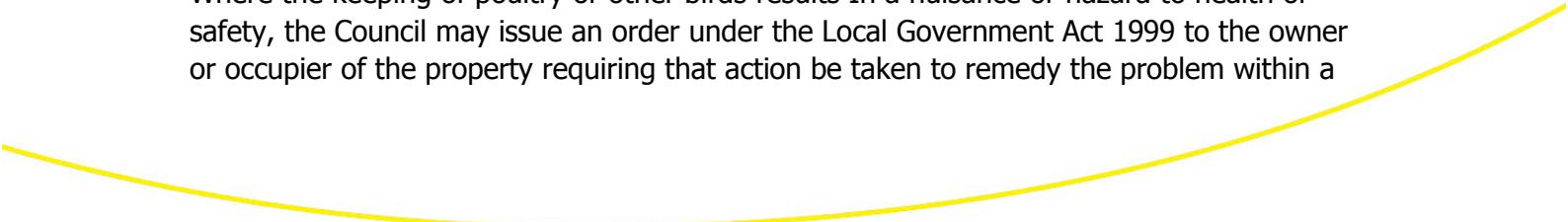
Fly baits and fly paper may be placed inside the shelter, out of reach of the fowls. Check these regularly and replace when necessary.

Keeping of roosters

To prevent the problem of noise pollution within the neighbourhood, it is strongly advised that roosters are not kept in heavily populated areas.

Notice to remedy

Where the keeping of poultry or other birds results in a nuisance or hazard to health or safety, the Council may issue an order under the Local Government Act 1999 to the owner or occupier of the property requiring that action be taken to remedy the problem within a



given time. The Council also has the power to carry out the required work if the owner or occupier fails to do so.

Insanitary conditions

In addition to the Local Government Act, the Public and Environmental Health Act 1987, provides controls to ensure that the keeping of animals and birds does not create an insanitary condition or the emission of offensive materials, including odours.

Expiation fees and legal remedies may be applied where proper care and management are not observed.

For more information

For more information about the keeping of animals and birds, please email admin@prospect.sa.gov.au or call 08 8269 5355 during business hours.



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