



Position Statement for the Provision of Regular Veterinary Care for Working Animals

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Introduction

The Working Animal Foundation Australia (WAFA) strongly advocates for regular veterinary care as a cornerstone of working animal welfare. Routine health checks ensure that working animals remain fit, healthy, and capable of performing their roles effectively, while also helping to identify and address potential health issues before they become serious.

WAFA recommends that:

1. Minimum Veterinary Care Requirements:

- Every working animal should see a veterinarian at least once per year for a comprehensive health assessment.

2. Recommended Veterinary Care Schedule:

- For optimal health and welfare, working animals should ideally undergo general health checks every six months. This allows for closer monitoring of their physical and mental well-being, especially given the physical and emotional demands placed on them in their roles.

Benefits of Regular Veterinary Care

- **Preventive Health:** Early detection of illnesses or injuries ensures timely treatment and reduces the risk of long-term complications.
- **Fitness for Work:** Regular assessments help determine whether a working animal remains fit and capable of performing their duties safely.
- **Customized Care:** Vets can provide tailored advice on diet, exercise, and preventive measures, such as vaccinations and parasite control, specific to the needs of the individual animal.
- **Behavioural Monitoring:** Routine visits can help identify behavioural changes that may indicate stress, burnout, or underlying health issues.

Special Considerations

- Animals with health conditions, such as those recovering from injury, or those approaching retirement age may require more frequent veterinary visits.
- Specialized working animals (e.g., guide animals, search-and-rescue animals) may benefit from additional assessments, such as orthopaedic evaluations or stress monitoring, depending on their role.

WAFA believes that prioritising regular veterinary care is essential to ensuring that working animals remain healthy, happy, and capable of fulfilling their vital roles in service to humans.

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Document Control

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