



Service Policy

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Service Overview	2
Services Provided	2
<i>(1) Pet Food and supplies</i>	3
<i>(2) Veterinary care</i>	3
(2.1) Vet Fees	4
(2.2) Microchipping	4
(2.3) Farewell Fund (Euthanasia and Cremation)	4
(2.3.1) Humane Euthanasia Policy	4
<i>(3) Safe Shelter</i>	6
(3.1) Commercial Boarding	6
(3.2) Foster Care	6
(3.2.1) Foster Care Programs	6
<i>(4) Pound Release and other requests</i>	8
<i>Waiting List and Case Prioritisation</i>	8
<i>Client Unable to Take Pet(s) Back</i>	8
<i>Privacy and Consent for Media Use</i>	9
<i>Service Adherence and Suspension</i>	9
<i>How to request assistance</i>	9
<i>Contact Us</i>	10



Introduction

Pets Of The Homeless ("POTH" or "we/us") collaborates with social service agencies to support individuals who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. This Policy outlines how caseworkers from social service agencies ("caseworker" or "you") can access our services, what assistance we provide, and the responsibilities required in return. All users must agree to the Terms & Conditions outlined in this Services Handbook before accessing our support.

Service Overview

POTH is a not-for-profit, volunteer-driven organisation dedicated to assisting the pets of those facing homelessness. We work directly with caseworkers, relying on them to assess clients' needs and act as the primary contact. **Clients should not contact POTH directly**; instead, all communication must go through caseworkers to ensure efficient service delivery.

We do not accept referrals from:

- Doctors, nurses, psychologists, psychiatrists, or financial practitioners
- Unregistered or non-professional practitioners

Services Provided

POTH helps with pet food and supplies, veterinary care, safe shelter, and other costs such as pound release fees. The following are the maximum allowances per client.



(1) Pet Food and supplies

Pet food is distributed through our [Community Partners](#) network. A full list of partners is available on our website. Each Community Partner determines client eligibility for assistance.

Caseworkers may submit a [Material Aid order request](#) for pick-up at our warehouse (84A Keys Rd, Cheltenham VIC 3192). Once processed, collection details will be confirmed via email within 48-72 hours. Orders must be collected by the caseworker who submitted the request.

- **Material aid is available for 12 months per client.**
- **If a client acquires a new pet during this period, POTH will not provide material aid for the additional pet.**

(2) Veterinary care

All veterinary services are provided through our approved partner vet clinics. Upon approval, POTH will arrange an appointment and provide an **Authorisation for Veterinary Services Form**, which must be signed by the caseworker on behalf of the client. Clients must bring this form to their appointment.

We will cover the following cost of service **per client**:

General or routine care (dental, diagnostics, etc.)	Up to \$500
Emergency care (surgery)	Up to \$1000

Clients may only access one of these categories per pet (e.g., if \$450 has been used for routine care, \$550 remains for emergency care).

Mandatory requirements

To promote responsible pet ownership, all pets must be:

- **Vaccinated** (to prevent serious illnesses such as Parvovirus, Cat Flu, and Feline Enteritis)
- **Microchipped** (a legal requirement in Victoria, essential for pet reunification)
- **Desexed** (reducing health risks and preventing unwanted litters)

POTH will arrange these services unless there is a serious medical reason preventing them.



(2.1) Vet Fees

Due to rising costs and frequent no-shows, a **non-refundable** service fee applies:

Vet appointments (routine care, diagnostics, etc.)	\$25 per pet
Desexing fee: cats	\$75 per pet
Desexing fee: dogs	\$125 per pet

(2.2) Microchipping

A Source Number is required when implanting a microchip into a dog or cat born after 1 July 2020. If your client has been given a pet without a Source Number, they should register a new account with the [Pet Exchange Register](#) and provide us with the Source Number before microchipping is organised. The application fee is a one-off payment and there is no need to renew annually.

(2.3) Farewell Fund (Euthanasia and Cremation)

POTH provides financial assistance for euthanasia and cremation services:

Veterinary Euthanasia and Cremation	Up to \$500
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(2.3.1) Humane Euthanasia Policy

The Farewell Fund provides financial assistance for humane euthanasia and private cremation to ensure that pets experiencing terminal illness or unmanageable suffering receive a dignified and compassionate end-of-life experience. This support helps pet guardians make the most ethical decision for their pets without financial barriers.



Eligibility for Farewell Fund Support:

- The pet must be assessed by a veterinarian, confirming a **terminal condition, severe suffering, or poor quality of life** with no reasonable treatment options.
- The guardian must be experiencing **financial hardship**, as determined by the Vet Program's eligibility criteria.
- Requests must be submitted by a **social worker, case manager, or support worker** on behalf of the client.

Scope of Assistance:

- **Funding Limit:** Up to **\$500 per pet**, covering euthanasia and private cremation.
- **Euthanasia Costs:** Assistance with humane euthanasia at a partner veterinary clinic.
- **Cremation & Ashes Return:** Where possible, private cremation with ashes returned to the guardian within the funding limit.
- **Exclusions:**
 - Requests for euthanasia based solely on behavioural issues or non-medical concerns will not be considered.

Ethical Considerations:

- Decisions prioritise **animal welfare and compassionate care**, ensuring that euthanasia is only approved when medically justified.
- Pets will be euthanised in a **stress-free, humane manner**, following veterinary best practices.
- The process should, where possible, allow the guardian to be **present with their pet** for comfort.

This policy ensures consistency in how euthanasia assistance is offered while upholding **our commitment to responsible pet guardianship and compassionate care**.



(3) Safe Shelter

Safe Shelter assistance is available through **commercial boarding facilities** and **foster care**.

(3.1) Commercial Boarding

- Open to the clients of **homelessness / FV case managers** only
- **Coverage per client:** Up to **\$650**
- The boarding facility must be a **registered animal business with an ABN**.
- The pet **must be vaccinated** (a certificate is required).
- If vaccination is needed, we can assist with a vet visit but clients must wait **10-12 days** before boarding.

We will cover the following cost of service, per client:

Commercial Boarding	Up to \$650
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(3.2) Foster Care

Foster placements depend on the availability of volunteers.

- **Clients may access foster care up to 3 times.**
- For subsequent placements, a **tiered fee structure** applies:
 - **First subsequent foster care request: \$100 per pet**
 - **Second subsequent foster care request: \$200 per pet**

(3.2.1) Foster Care Programs

1. **Short Tails – up to 6 weeks.** Open to the clients of AOD Clinicians, Hospital Social Workers, Community Social Workers, Mental Health Support Workers etc. Client's proof of hardship is required. This accommodation cannot be extended.



First time in foster care: Desexed pet	\$50 per pet
First time in foster care: entire cat	\$100 per pet (includes desexing fee)
First time in foster care: entire dog	\$150 per pet (includes desexing fee)
First subsequent foster care request	\$100 per pet
Second subsequent foster care request	\$200 per pet

2. **Long Tails** – up to 12 weeks. Open to clients of Homelessness Case Managers and DV Support Workers. Client's proof of hardship is required.

First time in foster care: Desexed pet	\$50 per pet
First time in foster care: entire cat	\$100 per pet (includes desexing fee)
First time in foster care: entire dog	\$150 per pet (includes desexing fee)
Foster care extension	\$75 per pet (up to 12 weeks)
First subsequent foster care request	\$100 per pet (up to 12 weeks)
Second subsequent foster care request	\$200 per pet (up to 12 weeks)

All pets in Safe Shelter must be **vaccinated, microchipped, and desexed**, unless a medical reason prevents it. This is a **non-negotiable condition** of the program.

An unvaccinated, entire pet can still be placed in a foster home, but they will be vaccinated and desexed once in care.

Transportation and Visitation

- To protect carer privacy, **clients cannot pick up/drop off pets at the foster home.**



- Caseworkers or POTH volunteers will coordinate transport.
- **Visitation is allowed for dogs only** and must be arranged in advance at a neutral location.

Admission Form/Agreement

Caseworkers or clients must complete an **Admission Agreement**, outlining care terms and responsibilities.

(4) Pound Release and other requests

POTH may assist with **pound release fees** (capped at **\$300 per client**). Other requests are assessed on a case-by-case basis. **POTH does not cover infringement fines issued by councils.**

Pound release	Up to \$300
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Waiting List and Case Prioritisation

As a **small, volunteer-powered** organisation, POTH often operates at capacity. Requests are placed on a **waiting list**, with priority given to emergency cases.

Caseworkers must inform POTH **immediately** if a request needs modification or if a client no longer requires assistance.

Client Unable to Take Pet(s) Back

If your client has chosen to relinquish their pets, it is the responsibility of the client to take their pet to a shelter as **we do not rehome pets**.



Privacy and Consent for Media Use

POTH relies on community support and storytelling to continue our work. With consent, we may share pet photos and client stories (with identities de-identified if needed).

We appreciate caseworkers' support in obtaining this consent, though we understand that it may not always be possible.

Service Adherence and Suspension

Failure to comply with the Terms & Conditions outlined in this Services Handbook may result in the **temporary suspension or permanent revocation** of service access.

How to request assistance

- **Review this Policy** to understand our terms and conditions.
- **Submit a Service Request Form** with complete details. Please select the service you require:



[Farewell Fund \(Euthanasia & Cremation\)](#)



[Pound Release & Other Requests](#)



[Safe Shelter \(Emergency Boarding/Foster Care\)](#)



[Veterinary Care](#)



- **For veterinary requests**, include:
 - o The reason for treatment
 - o Available dates/times for an appointment
- **For safe shelter requests**, specify:
 - o Required care start date & duration
 - o Detailed summary of pet's temperament & behaviour
- Ensure accurate transport details. **Only mark 'Yes' if transportation is arranged.**
- Provide **clear, detailed responses** to avoid delays.

Contact Us

For more information, please contact us at

E : hello@petsofthehomeless.org.au

W: www.petsofthehomeless.org.au

A: 84A Keys Rd, Cheltenham VIC 3192

This Policy will be reviewed on: **15 June 2026**