



Keeping poultry

There are many reasons residents may choose to keep a small number of poultry in the backyard. Chickens can help people live more sustainably by recycling kitchen scraps into fertilisers and having the added bonus of producing fresh eggs.

Residents in the City of West Torrens are permitted to keep chickens provided they follow these guidelines to ensure that they are kept in a healthy and sanitary environment.

Shelter

A well constructed poultry shelter helps minimise problems associated with poultry keeping. 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.

- A floor area of 0.37 square metres is required for each bird. For example a coop for 12 laying hens must be 2.4 metres long by 1.8 metres wide.
- Planning approval is required for coops more than 10 square metres.
- The coop must be placed at least one metre away from all boundary fences to allow access for cleaning.



- The structure must be neat and tidy.
- Food and straw must be kept in vermin proof receptacles.
- Waste should be cleared up and disposed of weekly in cooler months and more frequently during warmer months.
- Face the open front of the coop in an easterly or southerly direction for better ventilation and to help keep the floor dry.
- Paint the outside green to make it less conspicuous.
- Paint the roof white and plant trees and shrubs around the outside to help make it cooler in summer.
- Concrete flooring is recommended in the shelter.

Nuisance

All birds should be cared for so that they do not create a nuisance. It is important to ensure that due consideration be 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 the property boundary.
- 1.5 metres from any other structure (sheds, pergolas or carports).
- 15 meters (or 10 meters 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.

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Feeding

Food and water left for animals and birds can attract rats and mice, therefore only give enough food to feed the birds for one day. Consider suspending containers from the roof or place feed on stands that rats and mice cannot climb. These are readily available through hardware and farm suppliers. It is also important to keep bulk storage of food in vermin proof containers.

Sanitation

Poultry 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 container.

Any dead animals or birds must be disposed of in a sanitary manner.

Shelter floor litter

(eg straw, hay, shell grit etc.)

Keep the litter dry at all times. For this reason, the chicken's drinking water should be placed outside the shelter. Cut a hole through the shelter wall to allow your bird to drink.

Rake the litter occasionally and encourage chickens to scratch among the litter by throwing some wheat under the perches. Any wet litter should be removed. Wet food should never be thrown on the litter.

Pest control

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

Rats and mice should be discouraged by placing all food in vermin-proof containers unless it is for immediate consumption/use.

Roosters

Roosters should not be kept in heavily populated areas in order to prevent potential noise and nuisance problems. Council may instruct the removal of nuisance animals such as roosters.

Why does Council get involved?

Council addresses complaints based on nuisance. Nuisance complaints may include birds causing unreasonable noise, dust, odour, lack of containment, or if there are more birds than acceptable.

It is best to contact Council's Regulatory Services team, which can answer questions you may have in relation to keeping poultry or other birds.

For more information phone 8416 6333 during business hours.