

## NSD's Commitment to Animal Health and Wellbeing.

At NSD, providing for the physical and mental well-being of our service dogs is how we honour the dog's unconditional love and service. Our team understands that each dog is an individual and we are committed to ensuring each dog is properly aligned for the service they are providing. The assessment of our dogs' welfare and quality of life is an ongoing process over the course of their career.

We have a responsibility and duty of care to ensure that each and every dog is cared for from their physical health to their mental health needs.

NSD no longer houses dogs in a kennel environment; thereby reducing the risk of disease in our colony and eliminating kennel stress. Dogs diagnosed with communicable diseases (ie Kennel Cough) are isolated in their Volunteer Raiser Homes and supported by NSD Animal Health Staff and our veterinarians of record to further reduce the spread to other members of the canine community, NSD's and our regional community. Dogs return to group training activities once they have been cleared to return to group training activities. Regular cleaning of the NSD training centres and equipment further decrease risk of disease.

The Dog Welfare Assessment tool below not only helps guide our team in their assessment of each dog but assists us in developing care plans and making what are sometimes difficult decisions.

### Dog Welfare Assessment

The table below has 4 columns and 6 rows

WELFARE DOMAIN	RED Indications	AMBER Indications	GREEN Indications
<p><u>Nutrition</u></p> <p><i>Our dogs have a right to a nutritious diet which meets their individual needs</i></p> <p><u>Welfare Aim:</u> Minimise thirst and hunger and <i>enable</i> eating to be a pleasurable experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fed poor quality diet not appropriate for age or activity levels</li> <li>Fresh water not readily available</li> <li>Poor BCS i.e. 1,2,7,8 or 9 for adult or 1,2,6-9 puppies 10 months of age and younger</li> <li>Fed volumes of treats or human foods and main diet not adjusted</li> <li>Dog fed once daily, not at all and/or at irregular intervals</li> <li>Dog exercised within 1 hour either side of meals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diet not ideal for age or activity levels</li> <li>Water available but not always fresh</li> <li>Not ideal BCS i.e. 3,4 or 6 for adults 3 or 5 puppies 10 months of age and younger</li> <li>Some additional food stuffs used but main diet not adjusted accordingly</li> <li>Dog fed twice daily but at irregular intervals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good quality diet appropriate to age and activity levels</li> <li>Fresh clean water available at all times</li> <li>Good BCS (4 or 5 for adults and 4 puppies 10 months and younger)</li> <li>Main diet adjusted for any additional food stuffs use for reinforcing behaviours</li> <li>Some of daily feed delivered using interactive toys/dispensers and fed at least twice daily at regular intervals</li> <li>Dog adequately rested for an hour either side of meals</li> </ul>
<p><u>Environment</u></p> <p><i>Our dogs have the right to be comfortable and safe within their environment at work or at home</i></p> <p><u>Welfare Aim:</u> Minimise discomfort and exposure and <i>promote</i> thermal, physical and other comforts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited or no bedding provided</li> <li>Dog is socially isolated from human family members</li> <li>Dog is frequently disturbed and/or cannot choose privacy</li> <li>Other dogs in the house monopolise any bedding made available</li> <li>Bedding and environment require cleaning or areas are cluttered creating hazards for the dog</li> <li>Dog is restricted to small area with little or no choice to move around</li> <li>Poisons/hazards accessible to the dog</li> <li>Dog has infrequent access to toilet and/or the area is unhygienic</li> <li>Dog is subjected to second hand smoke or other atmospheric pollutants for long</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to bed but not ideal for individual's preference and/or in an area of the house where the dog is frequently disturbed</li> <li>Other dogs in the house compete for bedding</li> <li>Bedding and areas dog accesses cluttered or require some cleaning</li> <li>Dog has limited choice to move around or when at work is confined for long periods</li> <li>Dog may be able to access poisons/hazards</li> <li>Dog has restricted access for toileting and/or area is not kept clear of faeces</li> <li>Dog is occasionally subjected to second hand smoke or other atmospheric</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to own comfortable bed which meets the individual's preference and bed provides a safe-haven or private space for dog to be undisturbed</li> <li>Sufficient choice of beds for each dog in a multidog household</li> <li>Bedding and areas dog accesses are kept clean and clutter free</li> <li>Dog has choice to move around environment, if confined for periods e.g. at work dog has frequent opportunity to move and stretch</li> <li>Poisons/hazards are stored safely out of dog reach</li> <li>Dog has frequent opportunities to toilet on a preferred substrate and area used kept clear of faeces and cleaned regularly</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>periods of the day</li> <li>Dog is regularly subjected to intense light and/or loud or unpleasant noises</li> <li>Dogs environment(s) is wet/damp, does not have any ventilation, and dog is subjected to thermal extremes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pollutants</li> <li>Dog is occasionally subjected to intense light and/or loud or unpleasant noises</li> <li>One or more of the dog's regular environments is wet/damp, does not have adequate ventilation and the dog is sometimes subjected to thermal extremes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dog not subjected to second hand smoke or other atmospheric pollutants.</li> <li>Dog is not subjected to intense light and/or loud or unpleasant noises</li> <li>Dogs environment(s) is dry, free from drafts and has effective ventilation and temperature control throughout all seasons</li> </ul>
<p><b>Physical Health</b></p> <p><i>Our dogs have the right to good quality health care and timely access to veterinary treatment if they become unwell.</i></p> <p><u>Welfare Aim:</u> Minimise breathlessness, nausea, pain and other aversive experiences and <u>promote</u> the pleasures of robustness, vigour, strength and well-coordinated physical activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vaccination is overdue by more than 3 months</li> <li>Endo and Ecto parasite medicines are not being given</li> <li>Working dog has not received a vet health check for more than 12 months</li> <li>Dog is in poor physical condition (relative to its age) including BCS and has untreated health concerns</li> <li>A chronic health condition has not been treated and has become acute</li> <li>The dog has an acute health condition and quality of life is significantly impacted</li> <li>The dogs' handler does not understand the dog's physical health needs and has not sought veterinary treatment when required</li> <li>Dog is rarely or poorly groomed and/or handling is aversive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vaccination is less than 3 months over due</li> <li>Endo and ecto parasite control is given sporadically</li> <li>Working dog has not received a 6-monthly vet health check in last 9 months (6 months for dogs over 9 years)</li> <li>Dog has some loss of condition (relative to its age) including BCS and coat hygiene</li> <li>A chronic health condition is not optimally maintained and a vet check/review of medication is required</li> <li>The dogs' handler does not fully understand or recognise the dog's physical needs</li> <li>Dog's grooming schedule is irregular, not thorough or lacks use of cooperative care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fully up to date with vaccinations</li> <li>Receives regular endo and ecto parasite control following guidelines issued</li> <li>Working dog receiving regular 6 monthly vet health checks (3 monthly dogs over 9 years)</li> <li>Dog is in good physical condition (relative to its age) including BCS and coat hygiene</li> <li>Any dogs requiring medication are receiving this appropriately and any chronic conditions are being well managed</li> <li>The dogs' handler is well-aware of the dog's physical needs and understands when the dog is demonstrating signs of pain or discomfort</li> <li>When receiving treatment, cooperative care methods are used</li> <li>Dog receives daily grooming, using cooperative care approach</li> </ul>
<p><b>Behavioural Interactions</b></p> <p><i>Our dogs have the right to exhibit normal behaviours and enjoy friendly, positive interactions with people and other dogs in</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dog experiences regular aversive interactions with people (e.g. punishment, unpredictable or volatile behaviour) or conflict with other animals</li> <li>Dog has limited (less than 3 times per week) physical exercise (can include work/training) appropriate to its</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dog experiences some aversive interactions with people (e.g. punishment, unpredictable or volatile behaviour)</li> <li>Dog has regular physical exercise (can include work/training time) appropriate to its individual needs but not daily</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dog experiences consistent positive interactions with people or other animals</li> <li>Dog has daily physical exercise (can include work/training time) appropriate to its individual needs</li> <li>Dog has daily enrichment opportunities which encourage natural behaviours</li> </ul>

<p><i>varied conditions.</i></p> <p><u>Welfare Aim:</u> Minimise threats and unpleasant restriction on behaviour and <u>promote</u> choice and engagement in rewarding activities</p>	<p>individual needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dog has little or no enrichment opportunities</li> <li>• Very few or no toys provided or these are of poor/inappropriate quality</li> <li>• Dogs rest is regularly disturbed, no bed and/or sleeping area is in busy part of household</li> <li>• Dog does not have daily opportunity for interactive play/enrichment and is free run less than twice a week</li> <li>• Dog is left alone regularly for more than 4 hours or when left for any time displays signs of distress</li> <li>• Dogs work and social behaviours are rarely reinforced using positive methods and punishment is often used</li> <li>• Dogs showing signs of behavioural changes which dogs handler is unaware of</li> <li>• Dog does not interact with environment or human/animal family members and/or is withdrawn</li> <li>• Dog is regularly showing signs of stress in working situations and often chooses not to perform a working task</li> <li>• Dog's choice and opportunity to perform natural behaviours is regularly restricted when not working</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dog has occasional enrichment opportunities which encourage natural behaviours</li> <li>• Limited number of toys are provided and/or the dog is not always interested in them</li> <li>• Dog has its own bed but this is not located in an area which promotes undisturbed rest</li> <li>• There is occasional conflict between the dog and other pets in the household</li> <li>• Dog has daily opportunity for interactive play/enrichment but only indoors (no outdoor space/garden) but is free run several times a week.</li> <li>• Dog is not left alone for more than 4 hours in any 24-hour period but does show mild signs of distress when left</li> <li>• Dogs work and social behaviours are reinforced predominantly using positive methods but occasional punishment is used</li> <li>• The dogs handler requires some support to understand aging process and changes which may occur</li> <li>• Socially dog generally interacts with the environment &amp; human/animal family members but occasionally displays signs of withdrawal</li> <li>• Dog is occasionally showing signs of stress in working situations, and occasionally chooses not to perform working tasks</li> <li>• Dog's choice and opportunity to perform natural behaviours is occasionally restricted when not working</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toys are provided which are safe, appropriate and regularly rotated to encourage novelty</li> <li>• Dog is provided with a 'safe haven' and provided with opportunities to rest undisturbed</li> <li>• Where there are other pets in the household they interact appropriately</li> <li>• Dog has daily opportunity for interactive play/enrichment in a safe outdoor space/garden and is free run several times a week in a variety of locations.</li> <li>• Dog is not left alone for more than 4 hours in any 24- hour period and is relaxed when left</li> <li>• Dogs work and social behaviours are reinforced using only positive reinforcement methods</li> <li>• Dogs over 7 years, the dogs handler is aware of aging process and is observant for signs of changes in behaviour</li> <li>• Socially dog is relaxed and interacts positively with environment &amp; human/animal family members</li> <li>• Dog appears physically and mentally comfortable while working, and does not show any signs of stress. Always performs working tasks.</li> <li>• Dog is given choice and opportunity to perform natural behaviours when not working</li> </ul>
<u>Positive mental</u>	• The dog frequently encounters negative	• The dog encounters some negative	• The dog encounters positive experience in

<p><u>experiences</u></p> <p><i>Our dogs have the right to experience overall mental wellbeing</i></p> <p><u>Welfare Aim:</u> Promote various forms of comfort, pleasure, interest, confidence and a sense of control</p>	<p>experiences in nutrition, physical health, environment or behavioural interactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The dogs' handler does not counteract unavoidable negative experiences and increase positive experiences</li> <li>• The demands of the dog's role cause inappropriate and unmanaged levels of stress or anxiety</li> </ul>	<p>experience in nutrition, physical health, environment or behavioural interactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The dogs' handler requires support to understand how to counteract unavoidable negative experiences and increase positive experiences</li> <li>• The demands of the dog's role results in the dog being placed under some stress or anxiety which must be managed</li> </ul>	<p>nutrition, physical health, environment and behavioural interactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The dogs' handler counteracts unavoidable negative experiences and increase positive experiences as much as possible</li> <li>• Enrichment is a part of every day</li> <li>• Dog has sufficient rest and recreation and time to 'be a dog'</li> <li>• Dog is provided with opportunities for choice</li> </ul>
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Considering the descriptors above an overall score can be applied to capture the dogs state of wellbeing enabling decisions to be made regarding the most appropriate course of action as may be required.

## Overall Wellbeing Score

The following table contains 5 rows and 3 columns

Surviving				Thriving
1: very poor	2: poor	3: neutral	4: good	5: excellent
Immediate removal of dog from the handler or situation due to chronic or acute compromises to welfare. Euthanasia may be required to prevent suffering.	Temporary or permanent removal of the dog from the handler or situation should be considered due to chronic compromises to welfare.	A SMART action plan should be implemented that details the improvements that are required to improve dogs' welfare status.	No action required but handlers should be advised where their provision for their dogs' welfare could be improved still further.	No action required. Dog has excellent welfare.