



# Healthy Hens Happy Humans

A guide to the responsible keeping of  
poultry in residential areas of Tasmania's  
Central Coast Council



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# ① **Central Coast Council Animal Control By-Law**

The By-Law only applies to areas zoned as residential and requires people to obtain a permit to keep farm animals such as horses, cattle, pigs, sheep, goats and donkeys, more than 2 bee hives, roosters and fowl other than poultry.

Under the By-Law people who keep 6 or less adult standard hens; 10 or less adult bantam hens and a mix of 8 or less adult standard and bantam hens do not need to get a permit from Central Coast Council. A permit is not needed to keep chickens under the age of 6 months.

Anyone who wants to keep a rooster in the residential zone is required to apply for a permit.

Permits are a \$25 one-off payment per property

To read the By-Law in full go to [www.centralcoast.tas.gov.au](http://www.centralcoast.tas.gov.au)

To apply for a permit, contact the council on (03) 6429 8900



## ② **Healthy Hens Happy Humans**

“There are few things better than keeping a small flock of chooks in the backyard. They turn kitchen scraps into beautiful healthy eggs, make fantastic garden fertiliser and are a great way to teach children about animal husbandry and responsibility.

But not everyone loves chooks, and for some people the sound of a crowing rooster or the smell of a backyard hen house is a source of great distress.

That’s why Central Coast Council developed its Animal Control By-law. It aims to ensure that farmyard animals and in particular, poultry are kept in residential areas with minimal impact on neighbours.

Council encourages people to keep poultry in their suburban gardens and has produced this booklet to ensure best husbandry practices are applied and that healthy hens are given the best chance of adding to happy and harmonious communities.’

Councillor Jan Bonde  
Central Coast Mayor



### ③ Locating Your Chook House

Under the Animal Control By-Law, poultry and fowl cannot be kept within 6 metres of any neighbouring dwelling-house.

Chicken coops or houses cannot be constructed within 1 metre of a fence-line or boundary. Chicken runs can join a boundary fence.

Your budget, imagination or handyman skills are the only limitations to the sort of chicken coop and run you use to house your hens, but you must ensure good ventilation, that they can get shelter from the rain and sun, have a safe place to lay their eggs, and a warm perch to roost on.



Regardless of whether you buy or build your chicken coop the Animal Control By-Law stipulates that all fencing and structures must be maintained to prevent the escape of an animal from their enclosure and from your property.

## 4 Security for Chooks and Neighbours

Chicken coops and pens must be secure to safeguard hens from predators such as quolls, dogs and cats, and to keep vermin out. Rats and mice are attracted by chook food and food scraps and will set up camp near or in chook pens and then raid neighbouring backyards and homes, chasing food for their rapidly growing families. Rodents also attract snakes.

Keeping rodents out of chook pens requires good fencing and management. Fences should be dug into the ground and secured firmly. Barriers such as corrugated iron, concrete and timber sleepers are useful additions to any design.



The use of traps may be necessary to tackle a rodent problem but be careful to ensure pets and chooks can't access them.

Birds are also quick to learn there is a free meal of grain or bread in a chook pen, so the use of netting to enclose a pen is a recommended and effective strategy.



## 5 Feeding Your Chooks

Poultry enjoy a varied diet, and to lay well, one that's high in protein.

There are a range of proprietary grain and pellet rations on the market but what chooks really love are the foods humans eat. They will welcome table scraps, salad greens and bread - just don't feed too much at a time to avoid it rotting in their pen.

They also like herbs such as borage, comfrey, thyme and kale, and tansy and fennel grown near their run will help prevent some external parasites. Other shrubs can be used to provide shade.

As well as minerals, vitamins and protein, chooks also need access to small stones to store in their crops to grind food, and shell grit as a source of calcium and trace elements to build strong eggs.



## ⑥ Nothing To Crow About

Some people don't appreciate being woken by the crowing of a rooster. It's a nuisance which can lead to disputes with neighbours and then complaints to council.



The best way to comply with the Animal Control By-Law, and stop a rooster being a nuisance, is to put him into a night box either in the coop or a nearby shed.

It needs to have a perch and be big enough to house the bird but not tall enough for him to stretch out and crow. It needs to allow air to circulate but not for light to enter

Some people train their roosters to go into their night boxes. Others have to place them in the box and then release them each morning.



## 7 Feeding and Watering Systems

In residential backyards how you feed your chooks is as important as what you feed them.

Hand broadcasting grains, or filling open containers with chook food, is the perfect invitation for vermin to visit. If you hand feed only give your chooks as much as they will eat in a day, so none is left out overnight.



Treadle feeders, which retail for \$100 - \$200 but can be hand-made out of timber, are great at keeping wastage down to almost zero and vermin at bay. Treadle feeders store kilos of feed so are handy if you want to go away for a few days.

Make sure you store all bulk foods in vermin proof containers.

Chickens need fresh clean water but don't need big open vessels which other birds can foul. Gravity-fed watering systems are also useful if you need to medicate your flock.





## 8 Waste Management

Good management of hen house waste is essential in residential areas.

If your hen house has a cement or timber floor, spreading straw under roosting perches makes cleaning easy. Simply replace regularly and add the soiled straw to the compost bin.

If your hen house has an earth floor, deep littering is the answer. Lightly covering the chook poo with straw or sawdust and turning regularly will keep smells at bay and result in an annual harvest of mega-rich compost. If mites or moisture is a problem, just add builders' lime.



If none of the above options interest you, make sure you bag your hen house waste and dispose of it properly. Don't let hen house waste wash down onto neighbouring properties during rain events.

If a chook dies it can be bagged and disposed in regular garbage collection bins. If it's buried it should be covered with lime to a depth of no less than 50mm and not within 100 metres of any watercourse or building.

## 9 Harmonious Neighbourhoods

Chooks are the ultimate household recyclers, turning kitchen scraps into eggs and creating a fantastic fertiliser in the process.

How you manage your chooks will have a big impact on your neighbours, but those same hens could offer the perfect way of establishing better friendships with the folks over the side fence.



Let your neighbours know that you are happy to get their feedback if they have any concerns about your chickens. Respect their right to the peaceful enjoyment of their property and to a good night's sleep.

You will reap the rewards of building a chook house that is vermin and escape proof in the right place in your yard and managing it for the health of your birds and the good grace of your neighbours.

Offer to sell or give them fresh eggs or even excess compost – it will help pay for the joy of keeping poultry and maintain harmony in your neighbourhood. You can also give your neighbour a bucket with a lid, so they can collect their kitchen scraps for your hens to recycle.

## 10 Frequently Asked Questions

What happens if my application for a permit is unsuccessful?



The Animal Control By-Law details a series of penalties which can be applied if farm animals such as roosters are kept in residential areas without a permit.

The number and type of animals I'm keeping has changed. Do I need a new permit?



**Yes** - Permits are specific to each property and the numbers and types of animals nominated in the application. You can reduce the number of types of animals without having to get a new permit but if you increase your livestock numbers or types, a new permit is needed.

What will happen if a neighbour makes a complaint about my chooks?



A council officer will arrange to visit your property to investigate the complaint and if necessary, suggest ways in which you can remedy the issue. If the situation is not addressed and the neighbours keep complaining animals may be impounded and penalties issued.

## General information

To read Central Coast Council's Animal Control By-Law go to [www.centralcoast.tas.gov.au](http://www.centralcoast.tas.gov.au)

To apply for a permit, contact the Council on (03) 6429 8900 or visit the Council Administration Office at 19 King Edward Street, Ulverstone.

Central Coast Council greatly appreciates the input of the Ulverstone Poultry Club in the drafting of its Animal Control By-Law.

The Ulverstone Poultry Club has produced a comprehensive guide to keeping poultry, waterfowl, guinea fowl and pheasants. It includes all you need to know about poultry health, feeding, breeding and management, for keeping poultry happy.

For more information contact Ulverstone Poultry Club President Jill Weaver on 0428 138 973

