

Submission to the Draft Cat Management Policy

From: RSPCA Tasmania

Subject: Feedback on the Draft Cat Management Policy (Policy No. GTC-O-02)

Date: 21 June 2024

RSPCA Tasmania appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft Cat Management Policy (Policy No. GTC-O-02). We commend the Council's commitment to responsible cat ownership and the management of cat populations within the George Town Local Government Area (LGA). In reviewing the draft policy, we have considered our Cat Containment Position Paper, which emphasises the importance of keeping domestic cats within their owner's property boundaries to promote animal welfare and environmental protection.

Key Points from RSPCA's Cat Containment Policy:

1. Promotion of Responsible Cat Ownership:

- Encourage cat owners to keep their cats within the confines of their property to prevent roaming. This is vital for the safety of the cats and to reduce their impact on local wildlife and community wellbeing.
- Educate the community on the benefits of cat containment, which include enhanced health and longevity for the cats, reduced risk of injury or disease, and decreased nuisance behaviour.

2. Environmental and Wildlife Protection:

- Highlight the significant adverse effects roaming cats can have on native wildlife. Encourage measures that protect wildlife, such as cat containment and community education.
- Support initiatives that monitor and manage stray and feral cat populations to mitigate their impact on biodiversity.

3. Implementation of Cat Management Practices:

- Advocate for the implementation of evidence-based cat management practices that are humane and effective, including desexing, microchipping, and responsible rehoming programs.
- Endorse collaborative efforts with local organisations, such as Tassie Cat, to provide resources and support for responsible cat ownership and management.

Specific Feedback on Draft Cat Management Policy Sections:

1. Objective:

- We support the objective to encourage responsible cat ownership and management in line with the Cat Management Act 2009. We recommend including explicit reference to cat containment as a key component of responsible ownership.

2. Scope:

- The scope is appropriate, covering the George Town LGA. Emphasising cat containment within this scope can further strengthen the policy's effectiveness in promoting animal welfare and protecting local wildlife.

3. Policy Commitment:

- We agree with the policy commitment to reduce stray and feral cat populations and protect native wildlife. Including strategies for promoting cat containment and providing support for owners to achieve this will enhance these efforts.

4. Practical Policy Application:

- We commend the initiatives outlined, such as promoting responsible cat ownership and implementing de-sexing and micro-chipping programs. Adding specific actions related to educating the community about the benefits of cat containment and assisting owners in implementing containment measures would be beneficial.

5. Stakeholder Responsibilities & Opportunities:

- We appreciate the recognition of various stakeholders' roles in cat management. Encouraging collaboration between Council, RSPCA Tasmania, Tassie Cat, Just Cats, Ten Lives and other local organisations to promote and support cat containment will strengthen community engagement and policy outcomes.

Additional Recommendations:

- Community Education and Outreach:

- Develop and distribute educational materials on the importance of cat containment, including the health benefits for cats and the protection of local wildlife.

- Host community workshops and information sessions to provide guidance on how to effectively contain cats within property boundaries.

- Support for Cat Owners:

- Offer resources such as fencing solutions, cat enclosures, and other containment options to assist cat owners in keeping their cats safely contained.

- Provide financial assistance or subsidies for desexing and microchipping to encourage compliance and responsible ownership.

- Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Establish a system to monitor the effectiveness of cat containment measures and gather data on roaming cat incidents, wildlife predation, and community feedback.

- Regularly review and update the policy to reflect best practices and emerging evidence in cat management.

In conclusion, RSPCA Tasmania strongly supports the Council's efforts to manage cat populations and promote responsible ownership. By incorporating cat containment strategies and enhancing community education, the policy can achieve its objectives more effectively and contribute to the welfare of both cats and the broader environment.

Thank you for considering our submission.

Sincerely,



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