

Project Final Report

Grant number	2020/PROS/0001	Total grant amount	\$2,547,393
Project name	Keeping Cats Safe at Home	Project start date	1/01/2021
Grantee organisation	RSPCA NSW	Project end date	31/12/2024
Person submitting this report	Dr Gemma Ma	Reporting period	From 01/07/2023 to 31/12/2024

Project summary – ‘elevator pitch’

Domestic cats threaten the survival of many native animal species through competition and predation and are estimated to kill 53 million reptiles and 61 million birds in Australia each year. Hunting and killing is instinctive and even well-fed, owned pet cats hunt when given the opportunity. Cat ownership is around 27% in Australia, and thanks to their high reproductive rate (on average one female cat will produce two litters of four kittens each year), cat populations can grow rapidly. This Project developed and implemented a human behaviour change strategy that aimed to reduce pet cat impacts on wildlife by encouraging responsible cat ownership, especially increased containment of owned pet cats. The project was conducted in partnership with 11 NSW councils. Engagement and consultation with diverse local stakeholders including local government, veterinarians, wildlife organisations, animal welfare organisations and the cat owning and non-cat owning public enabled local drivers and barriers to cat containment to be identified. A tailored behaviour change strategy was developed for each participating local government area in consultation with Dr Lynette McLeod. The approach adopted was informed by the stakeholder consultation and included a social marketing campaign, school curriculum-linked incursion programs and community engagement events. Free cat desexing and microchipping, and other incentives for individual cat owners were also used to enhance community engagement and facilitate containment of cats. Multiple project resources such as a school curriculum-linked program have been developed and made publicly available to increase the reach of the project. The Project’s success has been measured using community surveys to track stakeholder engagement, changing knowledge, attitudes and cat ownership behaviours. Ecological impacts were assessed using localised camera trap monitoring in selected council areas to determine changes in cat and wildlife activity levels.

Project Health Summary

Scope	Milestones	Budget	Resources	Risk
Achieved all targets	Achieved all targets	Achieved all targets	Achieved all targets	Achieved all targets

Table 1 Reference Table for Project Health Summary

	Achieved all targets	Achieved most targets	Achieved few targets
Scope	The scope of the project remained the same.	Minor changes were made to the scope.	Significant changes were made to the project scope.
Milestones	80% or more of all milestones were completed as planned.	Between 60% and 80% of all milestones were completed as planned.	Less than 60% of all milestones were completed as planned.
Budget and expenditure <i>Approved budget refers to the most recently approved budget in your business plan or annual implementation plan (AIP)</i>	Final project expenditure remained at or below the approved budget. Overall underspend was less than 25%.	Final project expenditure was underspent by between 25% and 50%.	Project expenditure was underspent by more than 50%.
Resources	Project had sufficient resources available to complete the project.	Project required minimal additional resources to complete the project.	Project critically required additional resources to complete the project.
Risk	Project risks were effectively identified and managed with suitable mitigation actions with minor impact on project delivery.	Project risks were mostly identified and managed with suitable mitigation actions with moderate impact on project delivery.	Project risks were not effectively identified and managed with suitable mitigation actions with significant impact on project delivery.

Project summary

WHETHER THE PROJECT ACHIEVED ITS ORIGINAL INTENT

Keeping Cats Safe at Home (KCSAH) successfully designed and delivered a human behaviour change strategy for 11 diverse NSW council areas aiming to reduce the negative impacts domestic cats have on wildlife by increasing the uptake of responsible cat ownership behaviours including desexing and containment.

TO WHAT EXTENT DID THE PROJECT ACHIEVE ITS OUTCOMES

The most notable outcome achieved by KCSAH was a reduction in free-roaming cat density in all three participating council areas where ecology research was conducted pre- and post-intervention. This was measured by Dr Brooke Kennedy from the University of New England using a before-and-after study design across 80km transects. Between 2021 and 2024 the free-roaming cat population density reduced by 25% in the Blue Mountains, 35% in Campbelltown and 50% in the Tweed Shire.

Unfortunately, the methodology used for the pre-project social science research could not be replicated post-project because phone surveys have become increasingly expensive over time, while the sample they are able to achieve has become less representative of the broader community. The pre-intervention phone survey in 2021 cost over \$40,000 to achieve a sample of only 500 cat caregivers, compared to a cost of \$13,000 for a sample of 2,000 cat caregivers through an online panel in 2024, which yielded considerably higher data quality. Nonetheless, our post-project online panel cat caregiver questionnaire demonstrated that cat-containment social marketing campaigns are effective at reaching cat caregivers whose cats currently roam and are associated with changes in cat caregiver intentions to contain their cats in the future.

We demonstrated good progress towards intermediate outcomes. Where targeted cat desexing programs were conducted as part of the project activities we demonstrated substantial reductions in the impacts associated with free-roaming cats. Cat-related nuisance complaints decreased by more than 40% in seven project council areas, and by more than 60% in four project council areas. The number of cats impounded by partner councils also decreased substantially in some project council areas (Blue Mountains 54%, Campbelltown 59%, Parramatta 73%, Kyogle, and Walgett 100%).

Performance against immediate outcomes exceeded targets for all indicators except one. The project saw excellent engagement across all outputs, including desexing over 2,700 cats and microchipping 1,721 cats. Engagement with the project website and social marketing campaign also significantly exceeded targets, with a reach of more than 3.5 million through social media, more than 87,000 visits to the website, and more than 14,000 information resources downloaded. Engagement through all media platforms has been overwhelmingly positive throughout the 4-year project.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

KCSAH successfully designed and implemented a holistic and evidence-based human behaviour change strategy aiming to increase cat caregiver uptake of desexing and containment. Much of the project's success was thanks to effective collaboration with a variety of stakeholders including partner councils, local veterinary practices and other animal welfare organisations. Since commencing in 2021 the project has made substantial contributions to the scientific evidence base on domestic cat management through four publications in high-ranking international open-access peer-reviewed journals:

- Ma, G.C., McLeod, L.J. and Zito, S.J., 2023. Characteristics of cat semi-owners. *Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery*, 25(9), p.1098612X231194225. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098612X231194225>
- Ma, G.C. and McLeod, L.J., 2023. Understanding the factors influencing cat containment: identifying opportunities for behaviour change. *Animals*, 13(10), p.1630. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani13101630>
- Kennedy, B.P., Clemann, A. and Ma, G.C., 2024. Feline Encounters Down Under: Investigating the Activity of Cats and Native Wildlife at Sydney's North Head. *Animals*, 14(17), p.2485. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani14172485>
- Davey, I.J., Westman, M.E., Van der Saag, D., Ma, G.C. and Kennedy, B.P., 2023. Spatial and Temporal Movements of Free-Roaming Cats and Wildlife in Two Local Government Areas in Greater Sydney, Australia. *Animals*, 13(10), p.1711. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani13101711>

The project delivered against the following six key project outputs:

Major Projects Final report – Keeping Cats Safe at Home
Trust Template Version 7.1 (January 2025)

1) LANDING PAGE AND EMAIL NEWSLETTER

A Keeping Cats Safe at Home landing page hosted on the RSPCA NSW website was launched in June 2022 and has since been visited over 87,000 times. The landing page has been linked with other high-traffic pages on the RSPCA NSW website and has been optimised to perform well in internet searches. The landing page hosts engaging content about cat containment, downloadable handouts for cat caregivers, and includes the call to action “Sign up to *The Cat-ch Up!*” – the KCSAH email newsletter. This 12-month long triggered email journey consists of twelve editions packed with high quality and engaging cat care advice amongst which cat containment messaging has been embedded. To-date, *The Cat-ch Up!* has accrued more than 4,000 subscribers. The landing page includes two animated videos created for the project: 1) [The Story of Tanya & Tom](#), encourages people to notice stray cats in their areas and to act to find them safe, permanent homes; and 2) [The Story of Penny & Bella](#), which tells the story of a free-roaming pet cat who is injured when hit by a car and transitions to a safe-at-home lifestyle.

The email newsletter was supported by a cat grass giveaway campaign to drive subscriptions (Figure 1). Cat lovers were offered a free packet of cat grass seeds in exchange for their subscription. Cat grass packets were sent along with cat containment messaging and links to the KCSAH project webpage. The campaign was advertised on social media through Facebook and Instagram and resulted in over 4,000 people subscribing to *The Cat-ch Up!* More than 80% of subscribers remained in the email journey after 8 months.

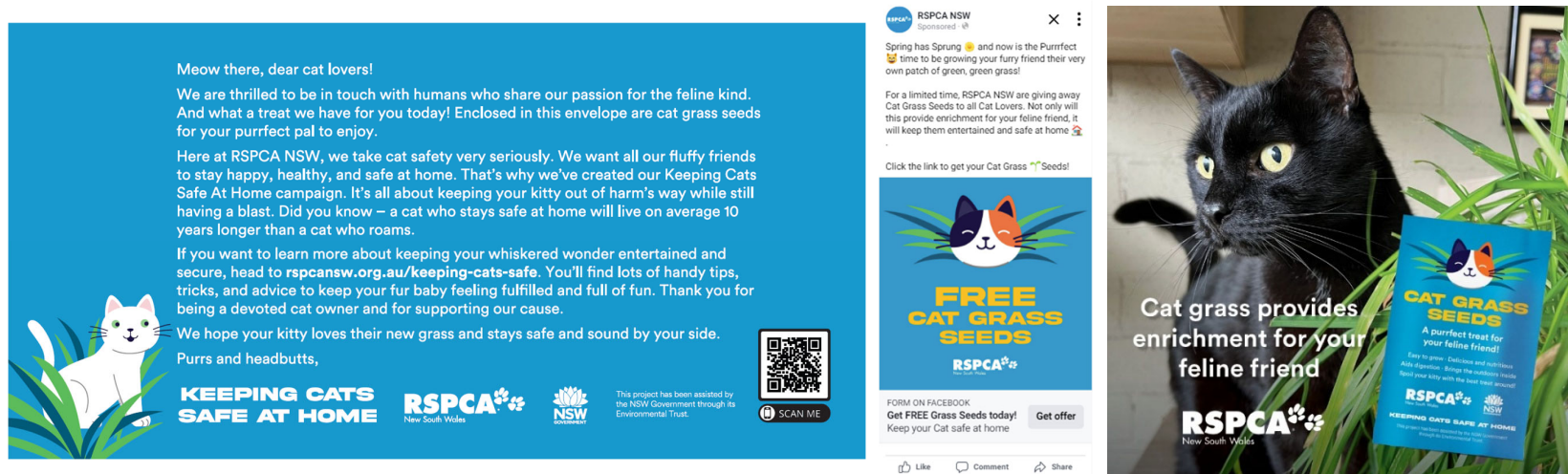


Figure 1: Keeping Cats Safe at Home social media cat grass campaign.

Traffic to the KCSAH webpage and downloads of resources were encouraged by publishing regular blog articles on the RSPCA NSW website on cat care and management. Blog articles were promoted through organic social media posts on the RSPCA NSW Facebook and Instagram accounts. Including blog articles, KCSAH webpages were visited more than 80,000 times. The most viewed blogs were “*I found a stray cat! What should I do?*” with 19,874 views and 9,092 downloads and “*I found kittens! What should I do?*” with 10,342 views and 4,004 downloads (Table 1).

Blog Title	Views	Clicks	Downloads
I found a stray cat! What should I do?	19,874	165	9,092
I found kittens! What should I do?	10,342	118	4,004
Kitten season 2022	5,189	5	121
Kitten season 2023	1,224	80	0
For the love of cats, leave lilies out of Valentine’s Day	1,163	16	0
Making the move	608	1	22
Managing cat overpopulation	604	1	0
Trick training	459	1	0
Desex your cat this kitten season	409	13	0
Kyogle education trip	324	1	0
Keeping Cats Safe at Home – progress in 2023	322	24	0
Transitioning your cat to an at home lifestyle	320	2	8
Top tips for feline fine and staying safe this International Cat Day	281	4	0
Benefits of playtime	230	0	0
Weddin Shire Council leading the way with cat welfare milestone	226	3	0
Harness training your cat	219	24	14
Recreating the outdoors indoors	198	3	3
Keeping your cat happy at home	191	0	4
Facts to get you through kitten season	131	0	0
Nose Work Enrichment for Cats: A Fun Way to Engage Your Feline Friend!	91	1	4
How to raise well-adjusted kittens	65	2	2
Warmer and longer days means its kitten season	4	13	0

Table 1: Keeping Cats Safe at Home blog articles

2) **INFORMATION RESOURCES**

Our consultation and social science research identified the psychological capability of cat caregivers as the most important barrier to cat caregivers preventing their cats from roaming. Cat caregivers who believed preventing their cat from roaming would be too difficult, were not confident they could prevent their cat from roaming or were not confident they could meet their cat’s needs if not roaming were significantly more likely to allow their cats to roam.

To address this gap in psychological capability we produced a range of information resources in the form of handouts and brochures to equip cat caregivers with the information and motivation needed to change their behaviour. These high-quality, engaging resources developed in consultation with clinical behaviourists and veterinarians, have been provided to local veterinary practices and rehoming organisations to distribute directly to cat and kitten caregivers during veterinary consultations and in adoption packs. These resources also enable veterinarians and rehoming organisation staff (including those at RSPCA NSW) to have face-to-face conversations with cat caregivers about the risks of roaming, how roaming can be prevented and how to effectively meet cats' needs at home. This is particularly valuable as veterinarians, and RSPCA have been identified as important sources of trusted information for cat caregivers (Elliot et al, 2019). Across the 4-year project, information resources have been provided directly to more than 14,000 cat caregivers.

All KCSAH resources are available free to download from the project landing page on the RSPCA NSW website and optimised for Google searches relating to cat care and management. They are suitable to read online, download or print. In total, more than 15,900 resources have been downloaded since the project commenced. Topics include: 1) Settling your cat into the family, 2) Transitioning to the safe-at-home life, 3) What your cat needs at home, 4) How to keep your cat safe at home, 5) Enrichment: help your cat live their best life at home, 6) Introducing your new cat to your dog and 7) Introducing your new cat to your existing feline family. Other information resources have also been produced including 1) What to do if you find a cat, 2) I found kittens! What should I do? 3) brochure: "Keeping your cat happy and healthy at home", and 4) How to talk to your neighbour about their cat.

3) SOCIAL MARKETING CAMPAIGN

The Keeping Cats Safe at Home social marketing campaign aimed to increase the psychological capability and motivation of cat caregivers to prevent their cats from roaming away from home. The campaign uses behaviour change techniques primarily focused on enablement, including 'demonstration of the behaviour', 'social support', 'goal setting' and 'action planning' (Michie et al, 2014). In addition, the campaigns demonstrate how cat caregivers can restructure their home environment to improve their physical capability to prevent their cats from roaming – for example by providing their cat with vertical space, scratching surfaces, opportunities for scent marking and predatory play and by encouraging the construction of secure catios or modifying fencing.

Messaging used in the campaign was clear, positive and engaging using our popular and trusted RSPCA NSW-owned social media channels. Different types of content were used. Highly engaging content such as recovery stories of individual cats who were injured while roaming (e.g. Figure 2a), competitions and examples of different containment systems (e.g. Figure 2b) were interspersed with informational posts (e.g. Figure 3). Local stakeholders, including partner councils, local veterinary practices and rehoming organisations were also encouraged to adapt and share our social marketing campaign content to increase reach and local engagement. The organic reach of RSPCA NSW-owned social media channels has been supplemented with strategic social media and internet search boosting and advertising. The campaign has also capitalised on substantial interest from radio, television and print media.

The social marketing campaign was divided into quarterly themed bursts to maximise audience engagement. These bursts consistently had a large reach and good engagement, for example, the "*Kitten Season*" campaign November 2022, which consisted of 39 posts across Facebook and Instagram had a total reach of over one million people, saw over 20,000 clicks on Facebook posts, received more than 4,000 comments, more than 24,000 reactions/likes and more than 3,000 shares. Across the four-year project, the social media campaign reached more than 3,500,000 people through nine themed bursts.

RSPCA NSW
June 21 · 🌐

Meet Melon a resilient feline who found his way to our shelter with a fractured hip and broken leg at just six months old, a testament to the dangers faced by free-roaming cats. ❤️

His trauma was obvious, they don't know what happened, but he was possibly hit by a car as it is one of the biggest risks cats face when roaming. Once stabilised, x-rays confirmed his injuries and revealed the extent of the healing process ahead.

After his surgery he received a splint from hip to toe on his right leg to allow it time to heal. His care plan at home was cage rest at first. His foster carer said, "It was really difficult and heartbreaking to see a young kitten restricted to a small cage but we got through it." 🥺

Despite the severity of his injuries, Melon has made a remarkable recovery and is getting better every day. He does still suffer from ongoing issues from the accident, attending monthly X-rays and taking daily pain killers to keep him pain free.

Luckily Melon now lives a life inside at his foster carers home, lounging in the sun and watching the birds from the safety of his home 🐦. He is so loved, and his foster family say, "he is the best cat ever."

Now that winter is here, there's no better time to introduce your cat to the comforts of living a safe-at-home lifestyle. For information on how to transition your cat, visit our website via the link below 📌

<https://www.rspcansw.org.au/keeping-cats-safe/>
#KeepingCatsSafeatHome #ItsGettingCold #CatProtection



(a)

RSPCA NSW
July 7 · 🌐

Life is better with a cat, and what's even better is when they are safe at home. One way to keep them safe and happy at home is by providing them with a cat enclosure or "catio" that offers a safe and stimulating outdoor environment where they can enjoy fresh air, sunshine, and all the wonders of nature. 🌿🏡

These photos are sure to inspire you, as Nick and Silvia have created an amazing space for Merlin (grey), Cleo (calico) and Kingston (ragdoll).

The great thing about this catio is that they are safe and have plenty of opportunities to express their natural cat behaviour. High places to view the world, platforms to jump on, plants to smell, soil and grass to roll on, a hammock to relax and have naps, a litter tray, and even a huge tree log to use as a scratcher! They can also safely access their home through one of the doors, whenever they feel like it.

For more inspiration on ways to keep your cat safe at home follow the link below 📌

<https://www.rspcansw.org.au/keeping-cats-safe/>
#keepingcatsafeathome #catsafety #cats



(b)

Figure 2: Examples of an individual cat recovery story (a) and a cat enclosure showcase (b) from the Keeping Cats Safe at Home social marketing campaign.



Figure 3: Examples of Keeping Cats Safe at Home informational social marketing campaign content

In 2024, a paid advertising campaign was developed in collaboration with social marketing company Khemistry to reach a broader cat-caregiver audience with the aim of increasing awareness and motivation to contain (Figure 4). Two creative concepts were tested through three focus groups with 24 cat caregivers whose cat currently roams away from home. The resulting campaign – [Not All Cat Videos Are Funny](#) – was broadcast through commercial catch-up television, YouTube, Facebook and Instagram October-December 2024. The campaign reached over 1.7 million individual people, the full video was viewed 4.6 million times, and the campaign landing page received 2,766 visits.



Figure 4: Paid Keeping Cats Safe at Home advertising campaign “Not All Cat Videos Are Funny” aired on commercial catch-up television, YouTube, Facebook and Instagram November-December 2024.

4) PARTNER PACKAGES

Partner packages including the information resources mentioned above and other project collateral have been distributed to all 11 partner councils, over 60 local veterinary clinics and more than 12 local rehoming organisations to enable them to have constructive conversations with cat caregivers about what cats need to live happy enriched lives and how to keep them safe at home. In addition, these resources have been incorporated into RSPCA NSW cat and kitten adoption packages across NSW and are being used in our three RSPCA NSW veterinary clinics.

In addition to sending partner packages to stakeholders, the KCSAH team have participated in more than 30 community events to engage directly with more than 36,000 members of the public including cat caregivers and members of the veterinary and animal-care profession (Figure 5). Events included the Cat Lovers Festival in 2023 and 2024, which was attended by more than 12,000 cat lovers each year and the Vet Expo in 2022 and 2024, attended by more than 3,000 veterinarians and support staff. Local community events, such as agricultural shows, Family Fun Days and Healthy Pet Days were attended alongside project partner councils in each of 11 project partner council areas.



Figure 5: The Keeping Cats Safe at Home team speaking to cat caregivers at the 2024 Cat Lovers Festivals and with the Kyogle Council at the 2024 Kyogle Show.

5) SCHOOL EDUCATION PACKAGE

KCSAH developed a NSW school curriculum-linked lesson plan for children aged between 5-12 years, a supporting PowerPoint presentation with embedded educational videos to enable school teachers, or volunteers to deliver lessons to primary school aged children on what cats need, the dangers to cats of roaming and the wildlife impacts from cat predation. A Keeping Cats Safe at Home magazine, an activity booklet and take-home activity poster have also been developed to complement the school program and encourage children to continue the conversation about cats with their families at home. These resources all highlight the value of cats as wonderful companions, while highlighting their potential impacts on wildlife and normalising keeping cats safely at home. All education resources, along with other activity sheets can be downloaded from the Keeping Cats Safe at Home webpage.

Throughout the project more than 1,400 children participated in KCSAH excursions to the RSPCA Sydney Education & Adoption Centre and KCSAH incursions at their local schools delivered by members of the RSPCA NSW Education team, often accompanied by staff from the local project partner council (Figure 6). School programs prioritised schools in remote and underserved areas and were enthusiastically received.



Figure 6: Keeping Cats Safe at Home education at RSPCA NSW Sydney Adoption & Education Centre (left), Byron Shire (centre), and the Northern Beaches (right).

Keeping Cats Safe at Home has also published a children’s book – *Stay Safe Clancy* – in collaboration with project partner Northern Beaches Council, and local artist Natasja Horne (Figure 7), which has been distributed to local libraries, primary schools, and community centres across the Northern Beaches council area, as well as to other KCSAH project partner councils.



Figure 7: Children’s book *Stay Safe Clancy* published with project partner Northern Beaches Council and local artist Natasja Horne.

6) TARGETED CAT DESEXING PROGRAMS

Owning a cat who is not desexed is an important barrier to keeping that cat contained. In addition, undesexed cats breed rapidly, contributing to challenges with overpopulation that exacerbate impacts on wildlife. Cost is the major barrier to the uptake of desexing. Hence free cat desexing and microchipping programs were established in each of the 11 Keeping Cats Safe at Home partner council areas and high-intensity targeted cat desexing programs (or “StrayCare” programs) were implemented with six of the partner councils to improve uptake of desexing. These programs worked collaboratively with 26 local veterinary practices, council animal management teams and local cat rescue volunteers to promote desexing especially of stray and semi-owned cats, encouraging semi-owners to take responsibility for

the cats for the rest of their lives. These programs address the underlying cause of cat overpopulation, which is a major contributor to wildlife impacts associated with domestic cats.

In total, 2,731 cats were desexed, including 1,486 females. This would be expected to prevent the addition of more than 7,000 kittens to the population in the next kitten season (Nutter et al., 2004). Most participating cats were also microchipped at the time of desexing, and all participating cat caregivers were provided with project information resources and were added to *The Cat-ch Up!* email newsletter mailing list.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES:

The major barrier to effective domestic cat management in NSW – of both owned and unowned domestic cats – is the regulatory framework under the *Companion Animals Act 1998 (NSW)*. This has affected the effectiveness of both the social marketing campaign to encourage cat containment and the project's targeted cat desexing programs because of:

- The absence of clear definitions of unowned or “stray” cats
- Lack of clarity around the role of councils in managing unowned or “stray” cats
- Limited enforcement actions available to councils for nuisance cats
- Lack of accessible surrender options for members of the public,
- The cost of registering a cat and the cost of the annual permit fee for cats who are not desexed before 4 months of age, both of which act as a disincentive for people to take on ownership responsibility for unowned cats that they care for.

The project was able to adapt well to challenges presented by COVID19 in 2021 and flooding in 2022. Widespread veterinary workforce challenges have limited the veterinary capacity available to provide cat desexing services in most areas across the life of the project, resulting in relatively higher cat desexing costs. Nonetheless, the project exceeded its original cat desexing targets and resulted in impressive impacts.

The cat caregiver population in NSW is large and diverse. Our research demonstrated at least four discrete cat-owning target audience segments exist, all with different priorities, needs and capabilities (Ma & McLeod, 2023). While *Keeping Cats Safe at Home* has been highly successful, it remains impossible to target all cat-owning audience segments through a single project. We prioritised target cat caregiver audience segments by balancing the likelihood of achieving outcomes with their cats' expected impact. One notable audience segment that we have identified as requiring a different behaviour change approach in future are cat owners with “working” cats on rural properties.

LEARNINGS AND INNOVATIONS:

We observed that cat overpopulation is a widespread problem that contributes to greater predation pressures on wildlife, especially in low socioeconomic and rural areas including *Keeping Cats Safe at Home* project areas such as Campbelltown, Walgett and Weddin Shires (Davey et al, 2023). Our consultation also highlighted that people unintentionally becoming cat owners (because the cat needed a home) is very common and that these people are more likely to allow their cats to roam unrestricted. Approximately half of the 5.3 million pet cats in Australia were passively acquired by people who had not planned to become cat owners (AMA, 2022). Our experience suggests that interventions aiming to reduce the number of cats who are passively acquired should be conducted alongside cat containment behaviour change interventions. We have shown that targeted cat desexing interventions rapidly reduce cat overpopulation, likely reduce the number of cats who are passively acquired, and as such, we recommend these desexing initiatives accompany interventions to increase owned cat containment.

Interventions to manage the impacts of cats in any setting can be severely compromised by migration of cats from other areas. Higher rates of migration require that more cats are desexed each year to prevent the cat population growing. We noticed this to be particularly important in rural areas where there is constant migration of feral cats onto rural properties and to the outskirts of rural towns as they disperse and seek food and territories. This highlights the importance of continuously resourcing cat management programs in these areas and maintaining high levels of vigilance to quickly identify and appropriately manage newly arrived cats. This observation also highlights the importance of coordinating programs to manage both domestic (owned and unowned) and feral cats within the same region.

Throughout the project we have identified the need for ongoing capacity building amongst the veterinary profession to develop their confidence to talk to cat caregivers about their management choices and to assist with interventions to reduce overpopulation. Veterinary professionals are a key stakeholder group for interventions to manage owned and unowned domestic cat populations. Their recommendations are highly influential to cat caregivers. They are also the only providers of surgical cat sterilisation services. Focus areas for veterinary continuing professional development and engagement to increase their capacity in these areas include:

- Cat behaviour (including cat's environmental and behavioural needs)
- Pre-pubertal cat desexing
- Low stress cat handling, anaesthetic and surgical techniques, especially for less socialised cats

STATUS OF EXPENDITURE AGAINST PLANNED BUDGET:

Expenditure occurred as per the approved budget.

REFERENCES:

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- Nutter FB, Levine JF, Stoskopf MK. Reproductive capacity of free-roaming domestic cats and kitten survival rate. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* **2004**; 225: 1399–1402.

Project outcomes

Outcome <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Evaluation questions <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Performance indicator <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Target <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Result <i>Cumulative over the life of the grant</i>
Ultimate outcomes				
Increased uptake of containment strategies by cat caregivers	What proportion of cat caregivers who have directly participated in the Project (e.g. through uptake of subsidised desexing or microchipping) have changed their cat containment behaviour since the start of the Project?	% Of Project participants surveyed who have adopted strategies to increase containment of their cat.	60%	The poor response rate from direct project participants (<10%) precluded a meaningful analysis.
	What proportion of cat caregivers overall in the target population (LGA) have changed their cat containment behaviour since the start of the Project?	% Of overall cat owning population of the LGA that have adopted strategies to increase containment of their cat	40%	<p>We were unable to exactly replicate the methodology of the pre-intervention questionnaire, which used a random phone questionnaire and a convenience sample through an online questionnaire. Phone surveys have become cost prohibitive and difficult to conduct due to low engagement. Instead, the post-intervention questionnaire used a random online panel. As such the pre- and post- intervention questionnaire results are not directly comparable.</p> <p>Instead, we investigated the cat containment behaviours and capability, opportunity and motivation of cat caregivers who had or had not encountered cat containment messaging in the previous 12 months.</p> <p>Key findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46% of respondents had encountered cat containment messaging in the last 12 months. • Containment messages effectively reach cat caregivers whose cat currently roams. • Owners who currently allow their cat to roam who had seen/heard containment

Outcome <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Evaluation questions <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Performance indicator <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Target <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Result <i>Cumulative over the life of the grant</i>
				<p>messages had significantly greater intentions to contain in future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owners who had seen/heard containment messages scored higher on capability, opportunity, and motivation. • Containment messaging was most often encountered via social media (65%), friends (46%) and family (41%). • While 40% of respondents felt cat containment messaging was unwelcome, 75% responded that it increased their awareness of roaming risks to cats, 71% agreed that it increased their awareness of cats' impacts on wildlife and 67% agreed that it had motivated them to change how they manage their cat. • 57% of respondents who had encountered cat containment messaging were aware of the RSPCA NSW Keeping Cats Safe at Home campaign.
Decreased number of free-roaming cats	Has there been an overall decrease in roaming cat activity measured by camera traps in intervention sites compared to baseline measurements?	% Overall reduction in cats observed using transect methodology	20%	<p>Blue Mountains -25% Tweed Shire -50% Campbelltown -35%</p> <p>NB "after" transect data could not be collected in Bryon Shire due to staffing challenges and poor weather.</p>
Reduced predation of wildlife by cats in participating LGAs	Has the number of reported cat predation events in target areas decreased?	% Decrease in the number of animals (amphibian, bird, mammal, reptile) rescued by NSW wildlife rehabilitation providers; reason for rescue listed as 'Attack – cat'	20%	<p>Percentage change in total number of wildlife rescued with reason listed as "Attack – cat" for each council area in FY22-23 compared to the 4-yr average FY17-18 to FY20-21 (noting project activities commenced mid FY21-22):</p> <p>Blue Mountains +228% Byron Shire -41%</p>

Outcome <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Evaluation questions <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Performance indicator <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Target <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Result <i>Cumulative over the life of the grant</i>
				Campbelltown +146% City of Parramatta +13% Hornsby Shire +104% Kyogle +17% Northern Beaches +25% Shoalhaven City +23% Tweed Shire +82% Walgett NA Weddin Shire NA NB data for FY23-24 were not yet available at time of submission.
Intermediate outcomes				
Reduced impact of free-roaming cats in participating LGAs	Has there been a reduction in the number of nuisance cat complaints to council?	% Reduction in cat complaints to council per 1,000 estimated resident population	20%	Percentage change in total nuisance complaints to council in FY23-24 compared to the 4-yr average FY17-18 to FY20-21 (noting project activities commenced mid FY21-22): Blue Mountains +78% Byron Shire +36% Campbelltown -64%^a City of Parramatta -51% Hornsby Shire -47% Kyogle -37%^b Northern Beaches -61% Shoalhaven City -42% Tweed Shire +6% Walgett -91% Weddin Shire -84% NB positive values represent an increase in nuisance complaints compared to pre-intervention average, negative values represent a reduction.

Outcome <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Evaluation questions <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Performance indicator <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Target <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Result <i>Cumulative over the life of the grant</i>
				<p>^a No cat nuisance complaint data collected by Campbelltown council until FY21-22 and by Parramatta council until FY20-21.</p>
	<p>Has there been a reduction in the number of cats impounded?</p>	<p>% Reduction in cats impounded per 1,000 estimate resident population</p>	<p>10%</p>	<p>Percentage change in total cats impounded by council in FY23-24 compared to the 4-yr average FY17-18 to FY20-21 (noting project activities commenced mid FY21-22):</p> <p>Blue Mountains -54% Byron Shire -24% Campbelltown -59%^a City of Parramatta -73%^a Hornsby Shire -49% Kyogle -100% Northern Beaches +53%^a Shoalhaven City -19% Tweed Shire -41% Walgett -100% Weddin Shire +380%^b</p> <p>NB positive values represent an increase in cats impounded compared to pre-intervention average, negative values represent a reduction.</p> <p>^a Increase in cats impounded in Northern Beaches Council area attributed to no targeted desexing activities undertaken in this area.</p> <p>^b Increase from average of 1 cat impounded annually pre-intervention to 6 in FY23-24. Attributed to improved community engagement and trust in council animal management staff.</p>

Outcome <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Evaluation questions <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Performance indicator <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Target <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Result <i>Cumulative over the life of the grant</i>
Increased uptake of responsible cat guardianship behaviours in participating LGAs	Has there been an increase in the uptake of desexing in participating LGAs?	Number of cats desexed through the project	1,000	2,731
	Has there been an increase in the number of cats registered in participating LGAs?	Number of new cats registered since the project launch	1,000	17,464 (as at 30 June 2024)
		% Increase in number of cats identified per 1,000 estimated resident population	20%	Blue Mountains +15% Byron Shire +6% Campbelltown +12% City of Parramatta +16% Hornsby Shire +12% Kyogle +18% Northern Beaches +12% Shoalhaven City +2% Tweed Shire +9% Walgett +57% Weddin Shire +75%
	Has there been an increase in pre-pubertal desexing?	Number of cats desexed at younger than 6 months of age through the project	300	877
Immediate outcomes				
Cat caregiver engagement	What proportion of the target population is engaging with the Project through the uptake of incentives such as desexing and microchipping	Number of cat caregivers participating	1,000	Cat caregivers who participated in desexing and microchipping: 1,570 Cat caregivers who participated in incentives competitions: 2,491 Total: 4,061

Outcome <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Evaluation questions <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Performance indicator <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Target <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Result <i>Cumulative over the life of the grant</i>
		Number of cats desexed	1,000	2,731
		Number of cats microchipped	1,000	1,721
		Number of cat enclosures purchased using project discount codes	300	31
		Number of cat caregivers visiting the project website via QR codes on promotional material	1,000	4,638
Community engagement through digital platforms	Is the community engaging with the digital Project platform?	Number of hits on Project website	TBA	Total project webpage views: 44,666 Of these, more than 31,000 events were from within NSW (70%). Most of visits were by people within Greater Sydney (63%), followed by Central Coast, Newcastle and Wollongong. Total views of project blogs: 42,474 Total: 87,140
		Number of downloads of resources	TBA	Total webpage downloads: 2,566 Total blog downloads: 13,354 Total: 15,920
		Number of people reached by social media posts	3,000,000	Long Live the Cat (August 2022) 326,038

Outcome <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Evaluation questions <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Performance indicator <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Target <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Result <i>Cumulative over the life of the grant</i>
				Kitten Season 2022 (November 2022) 1,122,313 For the Love of Cats 1 (February 2023) 419,809 It's Getting Cold 1 (June 2023) 279,320 Kitten Season 2023 (October 2023 – January 2024) 253,800 For the Love of Cats 2 (February – March 2024) 344,410 It's Getting Cold 2 (June 2024) 173,530 Long Live the Cat (August 2024) 73,243 Kitten Season 2024 (October – December 2024) 537,889 Total reach 3,530,352
Local stakeholders engaged	What proportion of local veterinarians are actively participating in the Project?	Number of local veterinary practices that will offer subsidised desexing and microchipping through the project.	10	26
		Number of veterinary practices supporting the Project (e.g. by hosting project promotional material,	20	51

Outcome <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Evaluation questions <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Performance indicator <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Target <i>Insert from business plan</i>	Result <i>Cumulative over the life of the grant</i>
		providing information resources to cat caregivers).		
		% Of local veterinarians who are supporting the Project (e.g. by hosting Project promotional material, encouraging pre-pubertal desexing and cat containment).	100%	100%
	How many local stakeholders have been engaged to assist with the project?	Number of other local organisations, businesses or individuals engaged to spread the reach of project messages.	10	31
Direct in-person contact with the community	How many cat caregivers have been reached directly through the Project	Number of people attending community events at which there is a project presence.	20,000	36,858
		Number of students participating in school curriculum-linked incursions/ excursions	1,000	1,404
		Number of cat caregivers receiving information resources through their participation in the project (adopters from partner rehoming organisations, participants in desexing and microchipping initiatives, people receiving information packs from community events).	10,000	Participants in desexing programs: 1,570 Cat adopters from RSPCA NSW: 8,234 Subscribers to email newsletter: 4,429 Total: 14,233