

**INQUIRY INTO MANAGEMENT OF CAT POPULATIONS
IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially
Confidential

I am a cat Volunteer lives around the Meadowbank area and been rescuing stray and abandon cats around my local area since April 2022. I worked with a collective of local cat volunteers and we are non-affiliated and self-funded with minimal government and charity supports. We recue and rehome cats and practice Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) in case where rehoming in not possible viable. Following literatures explains some of the works we do.

<https://kb.rspca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Cats-Trap-Neuter-Release-%E2%80%93-RSPCA-Research-Report-March-2011.pdf>

<https://www.alleycat.org/our-work/trap-neuter-return/>

As part of our work – we have managed to achieve:

- 25 kittens Rescued/rehome
- 12 cats social to human rescued and rehome
- 12 unsocial cats desex and will no longer contribute to cat populations

Thanks to our stray cat population have decrease from 12 cats to currently around 5 cats. Based on our experience We would like to communicate following to the inquiry that will greatly assist our work:

- **Improve perception of volunteers with recognition we do valuable work for the community** - we are not “weirdos” or “cat ladies”. We understand that unowned/stray cats are an issue, they can damage native fauna and create nuances. They can also adversely local communities’ relation as it polarise local population. Reduce population is to everyone’s benefit.

We would advice that council and government officials exercise a greater degree of empathy and leniency when dealing with local volunteers; rather than ostracized them with warnings and fines a degree of sympathy can be exercise. If local community complain about volunteers work officials should do their utmost to mediate on any disagreement (regardless official status of cats in the view of laws)

- **Change perception of cats and away from the perception that stray cats are “pest” needs to be removed but part of a community that need help and management**– Cats in urban areas are part of the local community and their welfare has an impact on the wider community. People should be encouraged to volunteer and seek out resources in rescue or TNR for cats living in their urban environments.
- **Free desexing and subsidise vet cat for local communities** – in forms of discounts/rebate for free desexing/microchip/registration for anyone that has a cat or dog. Local volunteers should be given free access to desexing for cats they ended up rescuing.
- **Distinction between “feral” cats and “Stray” cats:** While in context of conservation it might appears there are no distinction between feral and stray cats as they both capable of hunting. However there are distinction between “feral” and “strays” in that in an urbanise environment “strays” have a degree of socialisation and can be rescue and manage by local community as opposed to “ferals” which often seen as pest.

By enforcing distinction between “strays” and “ferals” you allow for local volunteer to “plug

in” and contribute to cat management/reduction work. Making all cats “feral” is counter intuitive as you will drive local volunteers away as no one wanted to manage cats that are going to be put down;

- **Avoid a blanket ban on cats going outdoor:** this is related to previous point of distinguishing stray cats from “feral” cats. A blanket ban on cats roaming while on surface sound ideal BUT its largely not enforceable as no council/government will have enough resources (nor commit to more resources) to a point where cats own will compliant to it. Cat owner should be encourage to keep their cats in door for environment conservation and safety reasons but blanket ban feeds into of ostracization of local cat volunteers as “weirdos” and “cat ladies”. We do this work because we care for animals and would like to have less barrier to our work not more impediments;
- **Legal methods to “surrender” unwanted cats** – we would like to see a means/way where residents can surrender their companion animals via contacting local charity and/or volunteers rather than for them to abandon their cat. If council have a way to work with local charity in setting up holding places where socialised cats can be collected and rescue this will stop cats abandonment;
- **Multi-channel and Multi-language campaign on desex/microchip/registration/vaccination of companion animals** – Australia is a multicultural society where migrants come from various part of the world. They might not understand the whys and the hows of desexing/microchipping/registering their cats. We should encourage them via various channels (facebook, Instagram, tik Tok) they should desex and registering their cats and who they can contact in order for them to help;
- **A community contact channels where people can get in touch with their local volunteers** where they can get help with their cat issue. Either via direct Facbook groups, Whatsapp channels, discord so on;
- **Pet shop that sells pedigree breed animals should have also areas where they can show rescue animals that people can adopt.** This can either be a board where people can see animals they adopt or a sperate cabinet where they can see rescue animals for adoption along with pedigree cats that are for sales;
- **Assist Sydney dogs and cats home in finding a permanent home** – this will create capacity for rescue as they are key to companion animals support in NSW;
- **All rescues should sign up to best practice guide on rescue and care** – right now anyone can setup and run a rescue organisation but there is a lack of oversight nor is there any best practice set out to guide anyone that would like to setup and run a rescue organisation. I recommend we should:
 - Work with rescue community to understand the best practice when it comes to TNR, managing kittens and cats or adoption;
 - A means to audit these organisation to ensure they are compliance to the rescue guidelines;

- This will improve transparency in rescue organisation and improve trust in rescue and adoption work.
- **Council provide/loan cat traps for the community and volunteers** – Rangers and council staff should also be trained on how to use traps and instruct any community members on setting up these traps.

Stray cat Colony brief management guidelines

General advice

- Colony should be in location where its not next to any major high traffic areas like roads or highways or major pedestrian walkways. Colony carers should also discourage stray cats from congregate near dense residential or any areas that might come into conflict with the community. They should be located close to parks (but not national parks nor conservation areas/wildlife sanctuaries).
 - In areas where there is dense commercial “town centres” – local business should work with colony carers and create a management plans to see a balance between animal welfare and not cause nuisance amongst communities;
 - Where possible – stay as “hidden”as possible. The main protection of colony management is to be as “invisible” as possible.
- Feeding stray cats should be a “means to an end” to reducing colony numbers rather than the main reason for managing the colony. Setting area for feeding serves the following objectives:
 - It anchors cat to a location so that they can managed and monitor. Vet care and TNR is more viable when there is a designated location to manage colony cats;
 - Cats with access to food and regular health care poses less of risk on predation of native animals;
 - Feeding schedule should be setup and multiple volunteers engaged to share the work;
 - If possible – collect food donation from ARC or even through local community donation drives.
- When feeding – always ensure no excess food scrap/garbage remains at feeding location
 - Don’s use disposable plates if possible;
 - Ensure fresh water are provided;
 - ALWAYS Clean up!!!!
- Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) should be the main objectives of colony management. Community is better served by a reduction in stray cats population and TNR offer the humane way this can be achieve
 - While there are question over effectiveness of TNR – this is the best “compromise” or “middle way” as there are often no resources allocate to enforce outright cat bans and a lot of the alternative cat control methods like shooting/poison bait/bear traps are not viable options in urbanised environment;
 - When trapping is use – colony carer should always use humane cat trap to ensure welfare of cats and volunteers are looked after;
 - Colony carers should have access to vets who are designated “rescue vets” or have prior experience of working with stray cats;
 - De-sexing vouchers sometimes is available via cat Protection society, Animal Welfare League, Desex Animal birth Control society (DABs);
 - Child under-age of 12 should only take part of TNR work with adult supervision.

- Volunteers should reach out on local animals and community social media group for assistances
 - Local charity groups and government organisation should also build relationships to local cat colony carers groups where possible;
 - Cat colony carers can be seen as the “fontline” volunteers in stray cats reduction/rescue works.
- When undertaking cat colony management work – volunteers should understand they are the advocate for cats and should engage in communication and education where possible
 - Always have a communication “pitch” ready when approach so colony carer can be effective in their communication to community and authorities;
 - Any abuse or harassment should not be tolerate – any threats to humans and/or animals should also be reported to the Police so there is an official record of interaction.

Feeding guide

- Adult colony cats will have intake of following amount of food:
 - 200g of wet food
 - 50g of dry food
 - Access to Fresh water (especially if only dry food is provided)
- There should be multiple plates space out over 1- 1.5m away from each other to avoid cat conflicts
 - Avoid setting up “ad hoc” feeding station to avoid additional rubbish and vermins attracted to food.
- Feeding should happened in evening after sunset to avoid conflict with local communities
 - Cats should generally have access to food for 7 days a week but if this is not possible should aim for 3-4 days a week with feeding taking place every other day

TNR Guide

When performing TNR works – cat colony carers should organise the following:

- A list of cats to target for TNR work – with sick, kittens and female cats being priority;
- Organize a means to hold the cats for 1+ week in between vet works
 - **Male cats will needed 2-3 days to recover from desex surgery; female cats will need upto 1 week**
 - Their health will needed to be constantly monitor during recovery with follow-up with vet in case of any health issues
- Contact vets who are “rescue vets” to conduct the desex surgery
 - Obtains desex discount vouchers from DABs, AWL, Cat Protection society;
 - Take advantages of free desexing scheme if offered by local LGA;
- Setup the trap in areas where cats frequent – under cover and not in direct sunlight or rain
 - Use Humane trap only – do not use leg trap or anything that can hurt wild animals;
 - Ensure traps are constantly under monitor;
 - Do not leave traps out overnight if the weather is extremely hot or cold!!!
 - Avoid trapping in the rain – as animal caught in trap while soak with rain can be dangerous to their health.
- Contact local rescue and foster if cats are socialised

- Ensure vets or volunteers check the cat for microchip even if they cats appear to be aggressive – sometimes own cat can aggressive in nature to human outside of their social circles
- Join cat rescue and TNR groups on Facebook/Quora/ Reddit to seek out further advice to better deal with their particular situation.

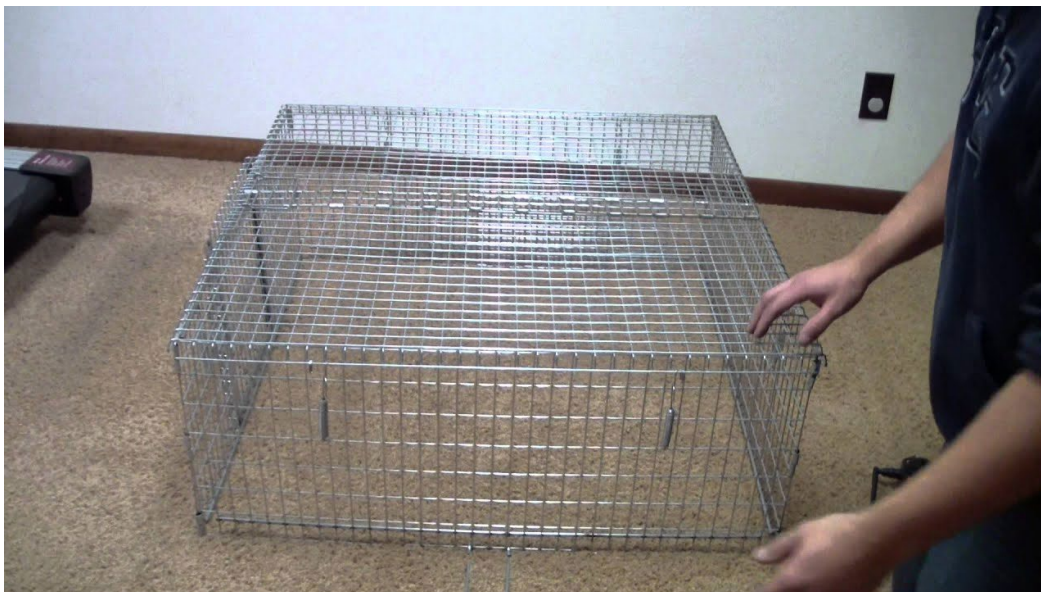
Cat Trap to use

<https://wiretainers.com.au/products/cat-traps/>



Drop trap

<https://animal-care.com.au/product/tomahawk-collapsible-drop-trap/>



Bait to attract cats

Roast Chicken, oily fish like Tuna and Anchovies

Setting up traps



Ensure the bowl is setup behind trip plate of the trap



Setup of “cat cage” of Holding cats

Kmart XL puppy cage

Kmart hard cat carrier

Zipties for fixing cage edges and fixing carrier to side of puppy cage

Litter tray

Cat litters and feed bowls

Puppy pads

Bedsheet/beach towels to cover cat cage while cats in recovery

N.B. – all gaps should be zip tied shut to prevent cats from escaping. All carriers should also be zip tied to the cage to prevent cats from moving it.





