

City of Joondalup

Urban Animal Management Action Plan

Cats

Background

Cats are a major urban animal and pets to many people in the City of Joondalup. Controlled cats do not present problems to the community. However, uncontrolled cats can be the cause of major issues in local neighbourhoods and also on a larger scale for the community.

The problem of uncontrolled cats results in a large number of complaints to Council every year. Complaints include the following:

- Mating and fighting noise
- Nuisance behaviours (territorial spraying and defecating in children sandpits / gardens etc)
- Attacks on other urban animals / pets
- Attacks on wildlife
- Feral Cats
- Overpopulation from unwanted litters

Aside from the complaints received by Council, the health of uncontrolled cats can be compromised through injuries and diseases caught through fighting and mating. Generally, most of the problems are caused by cat owners allowing their cats to wander and go unsterilised.

Currently there are no state or Federal laws that deal with the control of cats. The City has a local law that governs the number of cats permitted per property (3 cats per property plus their offspring up to the age of 3 months). Therefore, when Council receives complaints concerned with cat behaviour, apart from offering advice, there are no legal remedies available.

The City of Joondalup, through the Urban Animal Management Committee, has formulated an action plan specifically for cats, to tackle the issues pertaining to the City, the community and cat owners.

The action plan focuses on three areas of action with a number of strategies and their rationale. These are as follows:

1. Partnerships
2. Management Strategies
3. Education Strategies

1. Partnerships

1.1 The City of Joondalup Urban Animal Management Committee, Ranger and Health Services to develop external partnerships with:

- RSPCA
- Cat Haven
- Cat Sterilisation Society
- Local Vets and Veterinary Associations
- CALM
- Other Local Governments

Rationale: Partnerships with external organisations are required to ensure a coordinated and uniform approach to the issues arising from uncontrolled cats. Information from these organisations and cooperation in joint strategies is an important part of this action plan.

Action	Time Schedule	Task Allocation	Budget
Contact organisations listed above and discuss issues and options in relation to uncontrolled cats.	October 2001	Manager Leisure and Ranger Services	\$0

1.2 Internally, the City of Joondalup Urban Animal Management Committee, Ranger and Health Services to consult on:

- the type and number of cat complaints received;
- The implementation of the Urban Animal Management Plan for Cats.

Rationale: Internal coordination will result in a more customer focused approach to cat complaints and a uniform implementation of the action plan.

Action	Time Schedule	Task Allocation	Budget
Internal liaison between business units and the Urban Animal Management Committee	Ongoing	Ranger Services Health Service Operation Services Urban Animal Management Committee	\$0
All cat queries to be forwarded onto Health Services where information will be kept on database.	Duration of Action Plan	Health Services	\$0

2. Management Strategies

2.1 Cat Legislation

The City promotes the issue of cat control at the State Government level.

Rationale: The State government has considered cat legislation but has not followed through with any decisive actions or recommendations. As cat control is an issue concerning all local authorities, it is recommended that the State Government address cat control in a State Act.

Action	Time Schedule	Task Allocation	Budget
The City of Joondalup petitions the local State and Federal Government MP's to address the issue of cats at a State level with the implementation of Cat legislation.	Late October 2001 (parliament goes into recess from Dec 13)	Manager Leisure and Ranger Services in conjunction with the Urban Animal Management Committee	\$0
Approach WAMA to lobby the State Government	Early November 2001	Manager Leisure and Ranger Services in conjunction with the Urban Animal Management Committee	

2.2 Cat Registration

The City investigates the possibility of implementing compulsory cat registration, similar to dog registration, with discounts for sterilisation.

Rationale: Compulsory cat registration would identify and control the number of domestic cats and hopefully reduce the number of unwanted litters and eventual feral cats through the benefit of sterilisation cost benefits.

Action	Time Schedule	Task Allocation	Budget
The City of Joondalup to meet with cat agencies, local vets and their associations to ascertain views of compulsory registration.	October 2001	Manager Leisure and Ranger Services to Coordinate	\$0
The City investigates the method and viability of implementing a local law for compulsory cat registration should State Legislation be introduced.	Immediately following any State Legislation.	Consultant -Local Law	\$0

The City consults the community on its view on compulsory cat registration.	Immediately following any State Legislation.	Manager Leisure and Ranger Services to coordinate.	\$3,500
Compile all information and the Urban Animal Management Committee to make a decision on whether to proceed with compulsory cat registration.	As soon as practicable after the introduction of State Legislation.	Manager Leisure and Ranger Services to coordinate and present to Urban Animal Management Committee	\$0

2.3 Sterilisation of Cats

The City investigate with local vets, pet store owners, vet and cat associations the possibility of a joint program to encourage cat owners to sterilise their cats.

Rationale: Cat sterilisation will hopefully reduce the number of unwanted litters and eventual feral cats. Sterilisation also benefits the health of cats and they become less of a nuisance from mating and territorial behaviours and they tend not to wander as much.

Action	Time Schedule	Task Allocation	Budget
The City to consult with local vets, pet store owners, vet and cat associations.	October 2001	Manager Leisure and Ranger Services to coordinate	\$0
Determine the possibility and viability of developing and implementing a joint program on sterilisation.	November 2001	Manager Leisure and Ranger Services to coordinate	\$0
Report to Urban Animal Management Committee	December 2001	Manager Leisure and Ranger Services to coordinate	\$0
Urban Animal Management Committee to decide on further actions.	December 2001	Urban Animal Management Committee	\$0

2.4 Cat Curfew

The City to implement an education program to encourage cat owners to keep their cats inside between dusk and dawn.

Rationale: Cats are generally nocturnal and will wander more at night which can lead to nuisance and noise problems from mating and fighting.

Action	Time Schedule	Task Allocation	Budget
Coordinate and develop possible partnerships with local vets, vet associations and cat organisations to promote and educate the benefits of keeping cats inside at night.	October 2001 to discuss options	Manager Leisure and Ranger Services to coordinate	Included in education strategy budget
Development and implementation of joint program if practicable.	November 2001 to January 2002	Manager Leisure and Ranger Services to delegate	\$0
Assessment and Report to Urban Animal Management Committee	February 2002	Manager Leisure and Ranger Services to coordinate	\$0

3. Education Strategies

3.1 Responsible Cat Ownership

The City to work with local vets, pet stores, vet associations and cat organisations to implement an overall education program on responsible cat ownership.

Rationale: An overall education program will provide information on the requirements and benefits of responsible cat ownership for the cat owner, the cat and the wider community.

Action	Time Schedule	Task Allocation	Budget
Coordinate and develop possible partnerships with local vets, vet associations and cat organisations to promote and provide education on the benefits of responsible cat ownership.	October 2001	Project Officer	Included in overall Ranger Update in Community Newspaper, Local Vet and Association Newsletters