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## **Widespread Council and Community support for mandatory desexing shows survey**

*Friday, August 25, 2006. Sydney based Animal Welfare group "CatRescue" has shown that widespread support exists for Mandatory Desexing within many local councils and governments, claims Derek Knox, manager.*

Speaking this week whilst launching a petition to support changes in legislation to include mandatory desexing, Mr Knox was not surprised that Councils were supportive in the drive to make mandatory desexing a reality.

"Rangers and Councils deal with the coalface, they have the thankless task of managing the mess that is left after breeding season, the euthanasia of thousands of unwanted baby animals." Claims Mr Knox.

"Similarly they have political and legal issues to consider, it is not always possible to give full visible support to a totally logical solution, given the implications it could have to the workload and community"

Surveying 152 NSW based councils, there was a lot of support for proposed changes to the Companion animals act regarding desexing, but equally there were many areas that needed strong discussion around who would police, manage and fund such a radical change.

The cost of so much death is staggering, with an estimated 200000 unwanted animals killed every year. The infrastructure, salaries and operational expenses required to support this much work is expensive, and the human cost of trauma, stress and productivity losses weigh heavy.

"Council and Rangers have a significantly larger workload than our own private animal rescue. Enforcing the Companion Animals Act requires a lot of time, paperwork and accountability"

### **Progressive no-kill through desexing**

CatRescue is promoting the concept of subsidised, mandatory desexing. The organisation and it's supporters believe that this will help turn the tide and reduce the deaths of animals in pounds. Only then can we start moving to a progressive no kill strategy.

CatRescue also believes the community has a large part to play in developing solutions for problem of over population. At the launch of the petition today, CatRescue talked about effective community and council engagement being the only way to fix the problem.

"We took on hundreds of cats this year through a small metropolitan network of carers, at the same time we ran awareness, education and press programs to promote desexing and smart animal management" Said Kelly Lachman, lead carer. "Council played a part in that work with it's links to community groups and facilities"

## **Councils and community groups impressed with the program**

A number of NSW councils and community groups have come out in support of the program

"Council is currently working on an animal management strategy and I would suggest that the desexing of cats and dogs would be of great benefit for our community in terms of the environment, amenity of the area as well as general animal control and safety and , and council would support the compulsory desexing of these animals if it was to be proposed in an amendment to the legislation." - **Auburn Council**

**Monika's DoggieRescue**, arguably the most well known and public dog rescue group in Sydney has also put its support behind the program. "Every year we take on hundreds of abandoned puppies from unwanted litters and abuse. Mandatory desexing would be an aggressive step that will start to stem the tide of unwanted animals and heal the community" Said Monika

"Council generally supports the mandatory desexing principle with the obvious exception of animals that are owned by registered breeders. In Council's experience, it is the unowned dogs and cats which cause the most problems for councils. If we can reduce the number of unowned animals in the community then a fair proportion of the problems associated with these animals would disappear" said representatives from **Willoughby Council**

"We fully support mandatory desexing. A conservative estimate of 200,000 animals have to be killed in pounds every single year in Australia. Litters of puppies and kittens are either being advertised through Free To Good Home ads in newspapers etc (which puts the animals at great risk), unceremoniously dumped by the side of the road or abandoned at pounds/shelters. If you own an animal then have it desexed. And no, it doesn't need to have a litter first!" June Bird, Director of **"Saynotoanimalsinpetshops"**

Greater Taree City Council promotes the desexing of cats and dogs, and the significant importance of desexing, and believes everyone in the community should have the opportunity of desexing their pets, no matter how dire their financial situation. Council is supportive of your goal of ultimately ending pet overpopulation etc, and the benefits thereof, but to this end, sees the use of a variety of strategies promoted and supported by the DLG, rather than mandatory desexing as an answer to this issue - **Greater Taree Council**

## **Engaging with Council & Local Government the only solution**

Mr Knox recently spoke at a NSW Council animal management seminar. “We took heart in hearing from many councils about how they reduce the deaths, and we believe councils get a bad rap when it comes to animal management”

Many animal groups avoid council and government. We believe that the only effective way to drive change is to engage with council to show that there are alternatives that can work. The economic argument for Mandatory Desexing makes sense, we just need to prove it.

The group claim that often people wring their hands and wait for the government to wave a magic wand, but that true change wont happen without community involvement given the complexity of what is at stake.

“Many people condemn Council or RSPCA animal workers because there is euthanasia, but they don’t themselves have a better answer to the problem. It’s a simple question of numbers, there are not the homes for the extra 200,000 animals born every year” Says Kelly Lachman. “Ideally we can have a no kill society, but it can only happen in combination with mandatory desexing”

### **Issue about to hit home with 100, 000 unwanted births**

Sydney is now entering breeding season, and any undesexed female cat is now at the greatest risk of becoming pregnant. In many cases these unplanned births result in kittens being dumped.

“People who love their cats sometimes have the hardest time understanding the logic” Said Mr Knox. “Brother and sister cats will breed together, cute fluffy purebreds will breed with multiple males in a single night. As a result the tireless workers of the RSPCA and council rangers will be kept busy finding dumped litters of kittens and most of who will die needlessly though lack of homes.”

### **What can you do to help**

Desexing is the only solution to the problem of over population.

If you cannot afford to have your cat desexed, there is information on programs to help fund desexing available on our [www.catrescue.com.au](http://www.catrescue.com.au) website. Some councils run “desexathon” programs. But CatRescue urges you not to wait as it will cost more in the long run.

To prepare for this frenetic period, CatRescue is looking for more carers that can take on and foster care small groups of 2 cats during this peak season. By foster caring it gives us space and time to find new homes and keeps the cats healthy and happy.

“CatRescue doesn’t have a shelter or shopfront, so it’s the goodwill of people in the community that saves lives.”

Cat caring is very straight forward as cats are largely self reliant, all you need is the basics. Food, Litter and some common sense. Invariably the cats become part of a family life and you end up knowing all about cat care as a result. It’s an education experience for your whole family.

Carers also get involved in our advertising and programs. Quite often carers take on a catrescue email address and become part of the growing team, building a support network that helps rescue and rehomes.

The CatRescue project will work with community, council and welfare groups to tackle this problem head on.

The [www.catrescue.com.au](http://www.catrescue.com.au) website was used to launch the campaign and petition this week in preparation to what it expects will be a long summer of kitten and puppy dumping.

**For more information contact**

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