Report on the availability of early age desexing in Gold Coast City in 2010

In 2009/2010 the Gold Coast City Council worked with AWLQ, Dogs Queensland, Queensland Feline Association, Queensland Independent Cat Council, Council of Federated Cat Clubs of Qld, RSPCA Qld, Australian Veterinary Association, Wildlife Preservation Society Qld, Wildcare Qld, Pet Industry Assoc of Australia, and Qld Government Dept of Infrastructure and Planning to develop and introduce a Breeder Permit system in Gold Coast City.

The GCCC Breeder Permit system requires kittens to be desexed by breeders, unless the kitten’s health is likely to be put at serious risk by the desexing operation, or the kitten is being sold to another permitted breeder:

"The holder of the permit must not sell or otherwise dispose of an animal which is a cat or an animal of a litter of a cat, unless -

a) prior to sale or disposal, the holder obtains from a veterinary surgeon a certificate stating, or other evidence of, either of the following:

- that the animal is desexed
- that desexing the animal is likely to be a serious risk to the animal's health

b) the animal is sold or otherwise disposed of to the holder of a current animal breeder permit."

All 43 veterinary clinics on the Gold Coast were informed by letter of this new legislated requirement and asked to complete a short survey on whether they currently performed early age desexing at 8-10 weeks of age for kittens.

In total, 13 of the 43 vet clinics offered early age desexing of kittens at 8-10 weeks of age.

Veterinarians and cat breeders were also invited to attend an information session by Professor Jacqui Rand from the University of Queensland on the safety and benefits of early age desexing and a wet workshop to enable vets inexperienced in early age desexing to have an opportunity to practice the techniques with experienced veterinarians experienced in early age desexing at the AWL Qld Community Vet Clinic. A total of 9 breeders and 6 veterinarians attended this information session.
session and workshop. Most veterinarians who attended already offered early age desexing in their clinics.

The list of veterinarians who offered early age desexing was provided to cat breeder organisations, and to the community through newspaper articles and on the AWLQ website and newsletters.

As well, the safety and benefits of early age desexing was promoted by AWLQ through newspaper articles and desexing subsidy fliers and advertisements in Gold Coast City since 2003. For more than fifteen years, all kittens have been desexed by AWLQ at 8-10 weeks, prior to rehoming, with no evident increased risk than desexing at the traditional 6 months of age.

Author: J. Verrinder BA MBA MA