

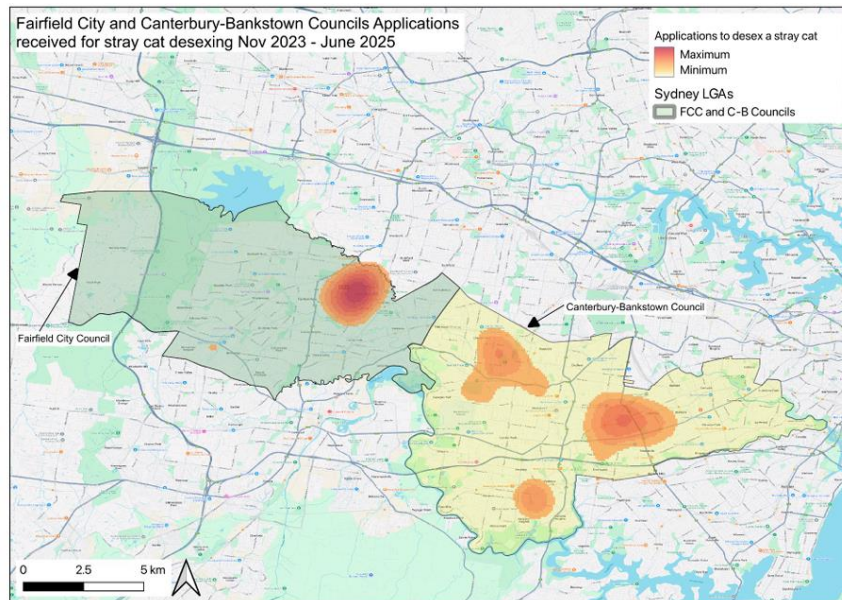
Removing barriers to access



- The Cat Protection Society of NSW project **DIVA Cats** - Desexing, Identification, and Vaccination Assistance for Cats - ran from July 2023 to June 2025, mostly funded by a \$1.5m NSW Government grant
- Research and experience show cost a significant obstacle to desexing
- Existing support included translated fact sheets, multilingual videos, and online directory of vets who speak community languages
- As part of DIVA Cats, Cat Protection commissioned The LOTE Agency to consult with key culturally and linguistically diverse communities in the target LGAs of Canterbury Bankstown and Fairfield

Program approach

- Data mapping
- Engagement with residents, vets and councils
- Discounted or free desexing, microchipping, parasite protection, vaccination, health check and registration (max fee \$20 per client)
- Provision of cat welfare information and resources
- Cat welfare survey
- Desktop comms strategy research
- Focus groups and community interviews
- Workshops with participants who desexed multiple cats under the program



Program achievements

Free or low-cost desexing has been shown to:

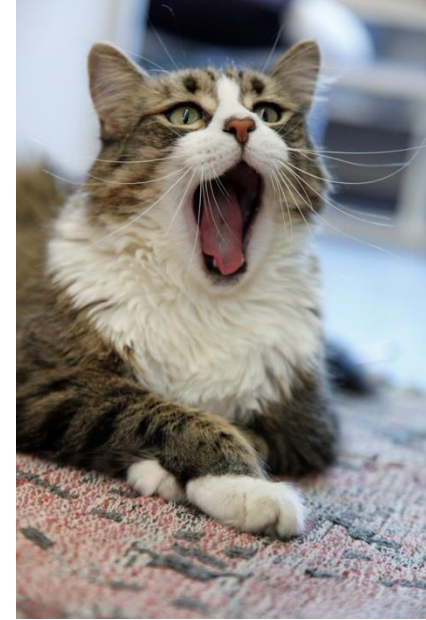
- Improve the health and wellbeing of carers & cats
- Improve neighbourhood amenity
- help place more cats into safe homes
- reduced cat population growth



- Exceeded the target of 2,750 cats, **with a total of 3,675 cats desexed**
- Extension of program to other areas
- Research findings into cat welfare beliefs
- Pilot multicultural communications strategies

Program challenges

- Immense demand (on top of our usual desexing and adoption programs)
- Local councils would not participate or collect data
- Veterinary workforce pressures and vaccine shortages
- Regulatory limits on cat ownership and registration requirement put cat carers at risk; we were unable to secure exemption of registration requirement



Learnings

Communication channels

- Social media
- Community radio
- Shopping centres, chemists, and libraries
- Community notice boards and street posters
- Religious and community centres
- Trusted messengers (vets and vet nurses, local champions, spiritual or faith-based leaders)

Priority messages for cat owners

- Desexing can and should happen before 12 weeks of age
- Desexing is caring and responsible
- risks of waiting and the benefits of early action
- Responsible owners act early to protect their cats

Priority messages for informal cat carers

- Cat welfare services are an ally, ready to help
- Taking small but meaningful actions
- Informal care is a legitimate and valued form of protection

Learnings for improving equity in access

- Data collection and exchange with residents, vets and councils helps to direct resource-limited efforts to areas of greatest need
- Community cat carers are motivated by a sense of duty to prevent suffering and in so doing, they incur significant personal costs of time, money and stress.
- Using **community languages**, make it easy to know where, when and how to access **affordable desexing services**.
- Create clear, welcoming pathways to support, linking carers to tools and advice

