



Cats, Community and Cameras: A New Era in Free-Roaming Cat Management

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One Welfare concept

Balancing and optimising the wellbeing of animals, people and the environment

How are we going with urban cat management?



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Score card for domestic cat mtg:

Animals:

- -33% of cats/kittens killed in pounds & shelters -Chau 2023 - Worst quarter of municipalities kill 67% - 100%
- Most are young (<6 months), healthy & "strays"





- Extensive research documents negative mental health impact on people euthanising animals
- Other staff impacted AMOs- QOL, job satisfaction
- People caring for cats being killed (Scotney 2023)



Input of cats into pounds is stable or increasing-chua 2023

NSW-173,000 cats impounded, 107,000 killed over 7 yrs

IT'S NOT JUST THE ANIMALS "The effect on mental health is a very real problem, and veterinarians were the most affected – it was terrible to see the impact on them" "I have seen so many people's lives damaged by having to kill a never ending stream of kittens and cats"

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Strategy 1: Stop the kittens!



- >50% cats entering shelters and pounds were born in previous 6 mths
- Targeted (microtargeted) free desexing programs



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Target to areas of high impoundments or calls = disadvantaged areas

Ipswich 15 cats/1000; Qld 7 cats/1000; >20 cats impounded/1000 residents

Rosewood, Goodna & Redbank Plains – pop 38,000



| | Rosewood [43 | Rosewood [43], Redbank Plains [44], Goodna [45], Queensland (QLD), and Australia. | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Suburb | Unemployment Rate (%) | Higher Education Level (%) | Median Weekly Househol Income (\$) | d Average No. People pe Household | |
| Rosewood | 10.8 | 6.1 | 1233 | 2.4 | |
| Redbank Plains | 12.5 | 8 | 1365 | 3.1 | |
| Goodna | 14.3 | 9.7 | 1179 | 2.8 | |
| QLD | 7.6 | 18.3 | 1675 | 2.5 | |
| Australia | 6.9 | 22 | 1746 | 2.5 | |

 Annual family income is the strongest predictor of whether cats in the household are desexed (Chua 2009)

- In disadvantaged suburbs, ≥ 30% households on < \$800/wk
- \$300-\$500+/ to desex & microchip female cat





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Flyers offering free sterilization

Strategy 2: Stop the timid-shy cats!

- Cat semi-owners caring for 1-3 cats represent a significant avenue to "rehome" timid and shy cats
- High risk of complaints, impoundments, euthanasia
- Make it easy for semi-owners to adopt!
- Reduces unnecessary euthanasia & is lower cost



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Strategy 3: Stop kittens from multicat sites and timid shy adults!

- Legislative changes to allow cats to be desexed and returned to carer with ear tip and microchip
- Business and organisations be also allowed to be owners









- Assist them to care for these cats desexing, microchipping, health care, food, litter
- Resolve complaints assist with cameras, fencing or deterrents, provide or move feeding stations, provide hiding places
- Complaints cost money and kill cats!!

Strategy 4: Stop killing healthy but fearful, timid shy adults!

- Legislative changes to allow
- impounded unidentified "stray" cats if healthy but would be euthanased because of timid, shy, fearful behaviour to be desexed and returned to home location with ear tip and microchip
- Return to field (shelter, neuter and return) and Working Cats (barn cats, factory cats etc)
- · It is life-saving!!
- For cats & shelter staff



Pet Welfare

& euthanasia

- a. Desexing owned cats to stop kittens being born to become strays or surrendered to shelter
- Converting semi-owners to owners to stop timid and shy cats and kittens coming into shelter
- Managing multi-cat sites (TNR) Desexing & MC cats for cat caregivers (semi-owners) to stop timid and shy cats & kittens coming into shelter
- d. Protecting human & animal lives (Return to field RTF and Barn/Working cats) Desex, MC & return healthy cats that would not be adopted to where they were found – someone is caring for them - RTF
- Assisting and supporting cat owners and carers to care for their cats and resolve issues- rather than enforcement & punishment approach 1st
- Resolving cat-related nuisance issues complaints kill cats!

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City of Ipswich -Community Cat Program >4500 cats desexed since Aug 2020 All semi-owners of 1-2 cats took ownership at the time of desexing 10% 74% considered they semi-owners (took ownership) were owners of the cat

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Key factors for success: Community Cat Program



- Identify suburbs with highest cat admissions or complaint calls
- Targeted (not microtargeted): Desex owned, semi-owned & unowned cats -30 cats /1000/yr
- Targeted & Microtargeted: Engage with community and AMOs to facilitate desexing and microchipping of cats most at risk of impoundment & euthanasia - Desex 10 cats per 1000 residents each year
- Work with complainants cameras & flyers, water-deterrents, fencing, bed-time feeding and keeping cats off your property
- Councils Assistive & supportive approach 1st

Guess what? It works!! Number of cats observed per camera deployment (every 6 mths) Deployment 3 Deployment 3 2329 Deployment 4







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Solving complaints: choosing community over killing Case study - Marg · "One cat sitting driveway" • Cameras – cats traversing property through holes in fence

• "I'll fix my fence" = shared effort to solve issue



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Without Community **Cat Programs**

- Someone has to kill the kittens and cats
- Killing healthy animal's damages people's lives, and some cases, killing animals kills people too.
- Suicide rate for animal rescue sector in USA reached number 1 with police & firemen







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Diverse & highly respected partners Pet Welfare



National & International funders: Brigitte Bardot Foundation, Pets Regardless Foundation, SPCA International

Major Australian Universities: Queensland and La Trobe

Australian Welfare and Rescue Groups: RSPCA Qld, AWL Queensland, Maneko Neki, Cheltenham Cat Rescue, PetRescue, Sydney Dogs' and Cats' Home, Cat Protection Society, NSW, Australian Pet Welfare Foundation

Local governments: Cities of Ipswich, Banyule

Veterinary care, diagnostics and pharmaceutical: Greencross, MSD Animal Health, PetStock, Rosewood Veterinary Service plus 10 veterinary clinics International partners: Neighborhood Cats, Dr John Boone