

NDN Cooperative Desexing Program

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National Desexing
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Getting 2 Zero

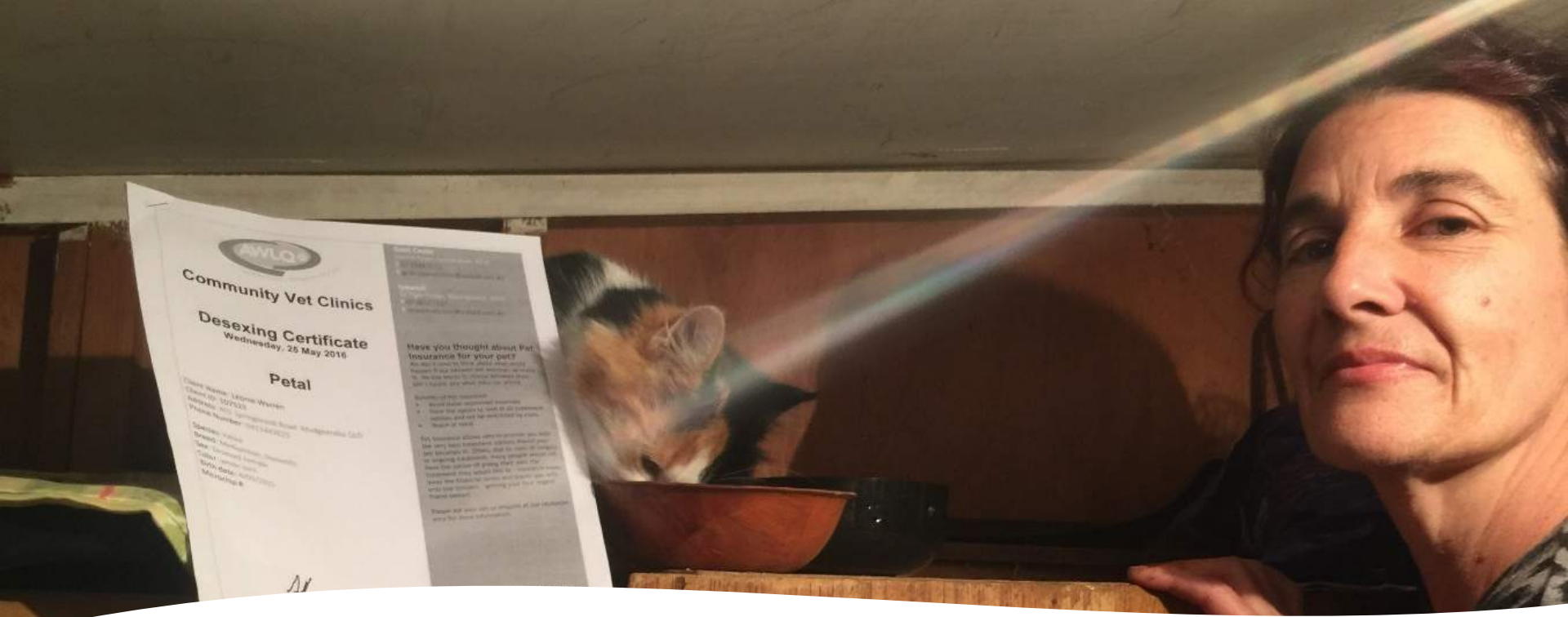
PRESENTED AT THE RSPCA
AUSTRALIA FELINE FUTURES
SEMINAR 2021



National Desexing Network

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the National Desexing Network directory. The browser tabs include 'Desexing (su...', 'Microsoft Wo', 'Image gallery', 'The Australia', 'DESEXING AI', 'Desexing', and 'how to take a'. The address bar shows the URL 'https://ndn.org.au/desexing-directory/'. The page features a search bar with the text 'Enter a location', a 'Select category' dropdown, and a search button. Below the search bar are 'Filter' and 'List' buttons, and a 'Map' button. A checkbox labeled 'Redo search when map moved' is visible. The main content is a map of Australia and surrounding regions, including Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and the Solomon Sea. The map shows several desexing locations marked with blue and yellow circles containing numbers: 2 in the Northern Territory, 4 in Western Australia, 4 in Queensland, 23 in Perth, and 86 in Brisbane. A purple pin with a plus sign is also visible in Western Australia. The map includes labels for various Australian states and territories: WESTERN AUSTRALIA, NORTHERN TERRITORY, QUEENSLAND, SOUTH AUSTRALIA, and NEW SOUTH WALES. The map also shows the Coral Sea, Timor Sea, Arafura Sea, Banda Sea, Java Sea, and Solomon Sea. A 'Map' dropdown menu is visible in the top left corner of the map area.





NDN Cooperative Desexing Program

- Ongoing - all year round
- Low cost desexing
- Targeted to help residents in need
- Easy, cost-effective and justifiable for Councils
- Applicable for owned, semi-owned and unowned cats

Focus on cats

- More prolific breeding rate of cats than dogs
- A greater proportion of unwanted litters of kittens than puppies in pounds and shelters.
- Double or triple euthanasia rates of cats than dogs in most Australian states
- However the program can also include dogs



Who is eligible for the NDN Cooperative Desexing Program vouchers?

All residents in need i.e.

- Pension/ concession card holders
- People on low incomes
- People with large numbers of cats
- Residents willing to desex and adopt or rehome stray unowned cats



NDN Cooperative Desexing Program

The costs shared by:

- Owners
- Council
- Local Vet Clinics
- National Desexing Network





NDN covers the labour costs of setting up and managing the program i.e. runs the program free of charge for Councils

- Invite local vets
- Provide promotional materials
- Receive calls & issue vouchers
5 days a week all year round
- Organise vet payments
- Keep data
- Report to Council
- Update the program structure when needed

Current NDN Cooperative Desexing Program Costs

These are reviewed and adjusted as needed every 2-3 years to maintain a reasonable payment to vets.

CATS	Owner pays	Council Subsidy	Vet receives*
Male cat castration	\$55	\$45	\$100
Female cat spey	\$65 for first cat \$50 additional cats	\$85 \$100	\$150



NDN Cooperative Desexing Program

- **Participating veterinary clinics agree to receive the set reduced payment** that still covers all wages (vet, vet nurse and receptionist) and material costs (sutures, pain-relief, etc) for the procedure
- **Vets benefit from fewer requests for euthanasia and discounted/free services**
- **Councils maximise the number of cats desexed with limited public funding**



Ineffective desexing programs

- Some Councils have been offering a voucher only e.g. \$50 toward desexing
- As some vets charge \$250 - \$300 to desex a female cat, residents on low income still have to pay at least \$200, plus an extra \$70 - \$100 if the cat is pregnant or in-season, which they cannot afford



An example of a Victorian Council's AVA Desexing Subsidy Program with discounted vet prices and a Council subsidy still costs too much for residents in need to afford for female cats

Age of cat	Discounted desexing fee	Owner pays	Council pays
Female mature (over 7 months)	\$168	\$112	\$56
Female immature (under 7 months)	\$144	\$96	\$56
Male	\$96	\$64	\$32



Some Council programs have prohibitive voucher conditions

- a maximum of two vouchers per household
- pets must be vaccinated and have a current vaccination certificate
- if your pet is an older female an extra charge applies.

<https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/residents/pets/Pages/desexing-your-cat-or-dog.aspx>

NDN Cooperative Desexing Program has consistent conditions for participating vets

- 24 hour pain relief included
- no requirement to vaccinate before desexing.
- If cats are **pregnant or in season**, owners are not asked for additional payment. Instead **vets claim an additional \$55 from the Council Desex Fund.**



Low cost V Free Desexing?

- To maximise the number of cats desexed with limited public funding, the NDN Cooperative Desexing Program asks residents to pay a small proportion of the desexing cost (which is affordable from their pension or low income i.e. \$55 - \$65.)
- However if Council can afford to cover the whole vet payment and still desex large numbers of cats **particularly in targeted low socio-economic areas**, providing free desexing to people in need or all residents is worthwhile and possible in our program.



Free Desexing

- So far only one Council with a higher socio-economic demographic has provided free desexing to everyone, using the NDN Cooperative Desexing Program, to increase the uptake.
- While people who access the NDN program generally indicate they are happy to pay \$55 - \$65, there are some who are unable to pay this amount.



Where free desexing is necessary

- People who have taken in a stray cat or two who are pregnant so they end up with 10 kittens as well. They want to prevent further breeding but are unable to pay for 10 -12 cats to be desexed. If these kittens then breed or are given away undesexed, the problem just gets worse.
- It can be also justified for people who are willing to help organize desexing and rehoming to reduce colony cat numbers, as they are providing a community service and reducing Council workload .

New element for NDN Cooperative Desexing Program in 2021

CATS	Owner pays	Council Subsidy	Vet receives* Covers all costs incl wages
Male cat castration	\$55	\$45	\$100
Female cat spey	\$65 for first cat \$50 second cat	\$85 \$100	\$150
More than 2 cats	Free	\$150	\$150

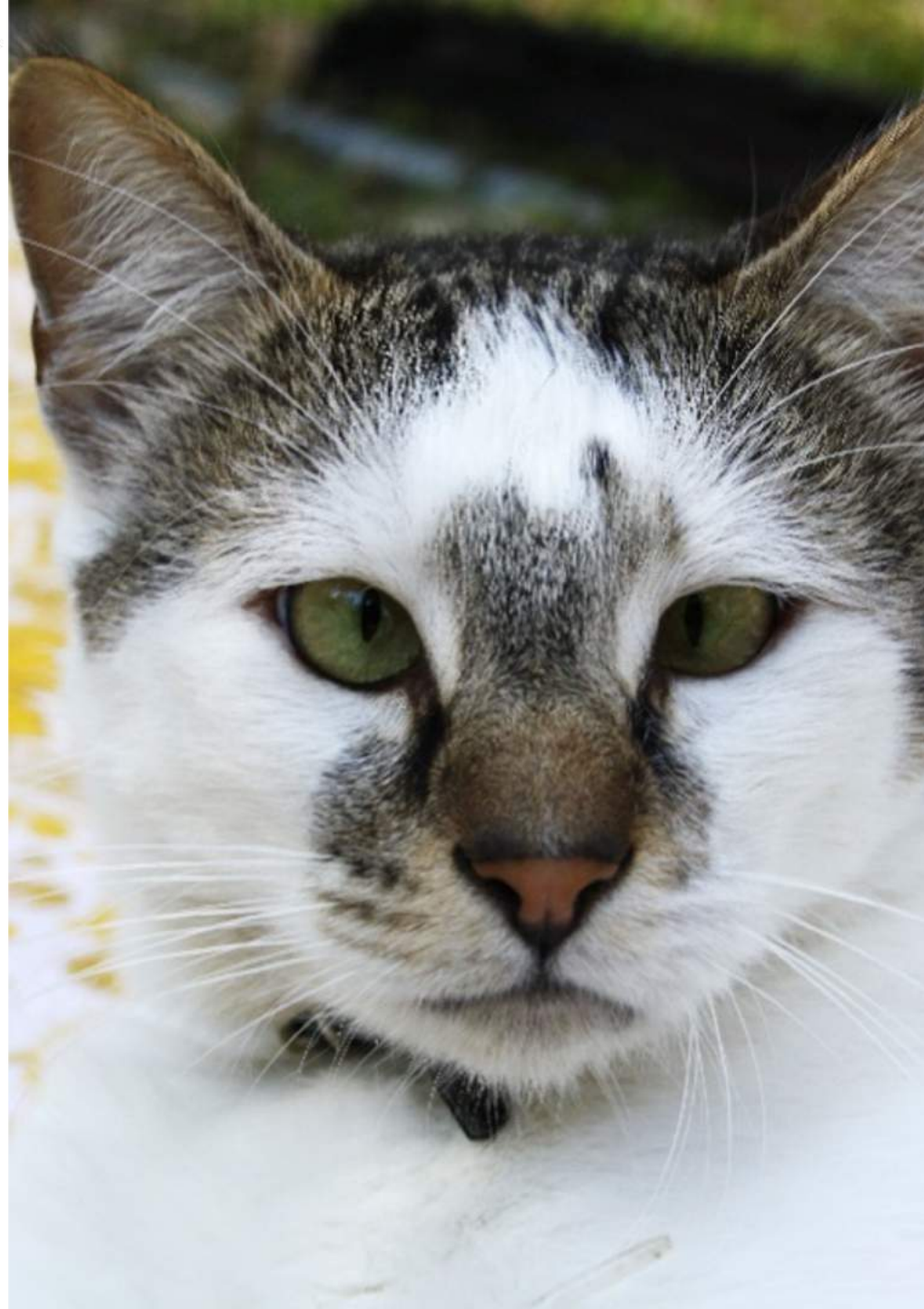


Some Councils include microchipping in the NDN Cooperative Desexing Program

CATS	Owner pays	Council Subsidy	Vet receives* Covers all costs incl wages
Microchip	\$5	\$25	\$30

Cat Microchipping combined with Registration can be a barrier to desexing

- Some Councils require microchipping before or at time of desexing which enables tracing for registration payment.
- People on low incomes are wary of having to pay an additional \$50 registration and so are unwilling to microchip their cat.
- Those wanting to desex multiple strays are unable to afford \$50 for each cat on top of the desexing and microchipping costs.





Free cat microchipping & registration

NDN recommends free microchipping and registration for those who need it, particularly for **people with multiple cats** who are **providing a community service i.e.**

- semi-owners adopting a stray cat or two (desexing and microchipping cats in their name)
- Cat carers willing to manage a cat colony to desex and rehome or monitor until numbers reduce.



Councils
involved in
NDN
Cooperative
Desexing
Programs

- 12 Councils currently (as at Dec 2020):
 - Cairns, Central Highlands, Fraser Coast, Lockyer Valley, Scenic Rim (Qld) - 5
 - Campbelltown, Hornsby, Liverpool Plains (NSW) - 3
 - Alpine, Bendigo, Moira (Vic) - 3
 - Whyalla (SA) -1

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How much do these Councils budget for?

- \$1000 - \$20 000 currently (as at Dec 2020)
- One large Qld Council has provided \$57 000 for one year
- Depends on size of population, community need, and capacity of Council
- The value in the NDN program - **all Council funding is used for desexing subsidies** – NOT for promotion or management costs, as other programs sometimes do

Benefits of Councils funding a well-structured ongoing Cooperative Desexing Program



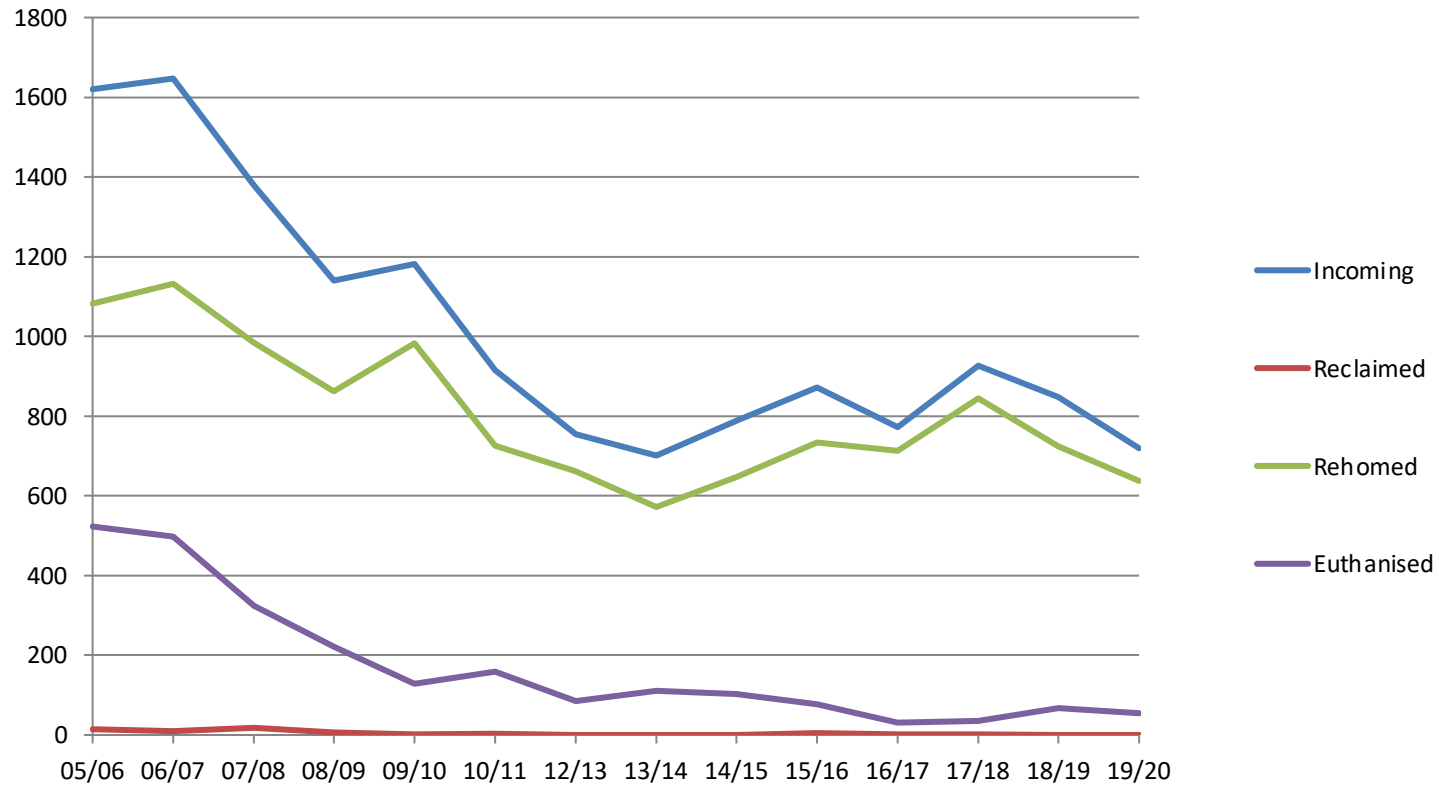
1. REDUCTION IN NUMBERS OF UNWANTED KITTENS

Number of kittens coming into the City of Gold Coast pound and shelter halved between 2005/6 and 2013/14



Gold Coast Kittens 2005/6 - 2019/20

Note: 2011/12 not included due to change in database management systems. Pound reclaims of kittens have not been made available since 2009/10. However numbers of reclaimed kittens had previously been very low.



2. LOWER CAT EUTHANASIA RATES

Cat Euth Rates			
	2005/6	2016/17	Reduction
Victoria	?	48%*	? %
Gold Coast	48%	8%	41%

*RAND ET AL. STRATEGIES TO REDUCE THE EUTHANASIA OF IMPOUNDED DOGS AND CATS USED BY COUNCILS IN VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA; ANIMALS, 2018.

3. COUNCIL SAVINGS BY FUNDING DESEXING SUBSIDIES instead of COLLECT/HOLD/EUTHANIZE.

**These savings increase exponentially as for each prevented litter, thousands more kittens who would have been produced BY EACH CAT IN THE LITTER are also prevented.*

Cat management strategies	Collect/Hold/Euthanase one cat	Council NDN Desexing Subsidy (average) One cat	Savings by preventing one unwanted cat / or one litter	Savings in 1 year if 300 cats desexed (cost \$22 500), preventing one litter each
COSTS/SAVINGS held 4 days (on average)	\$220	\$75	\$145	\$43 500
COSTS held 14 days (on average)	\$420	\$75	\$345	\$103 500



COUNCIL SAVINGS BY FUNDING DESEXING SUBSIDIES instead of COLLECTING/HOLDING/REHOMING

Cat management strategies	COST Collect /Hold/ Rehome one cat	COST Council Desexing Subsidy (average) One cat	SAVINGS by preventing one unwanted cat, instead of rehoming	Savings by desexing 300 cats (cost \$22 500), instead of rehoming *
Costs/Savings if held 4 days on average	\$620	\$75	\$545	\$168 000
COSTS held 14 days (on average)	\$820	\$75	\$745	\$223 500



4. Positive animal management = greater satisfaction

AMO's able to offer support rather than fines and removal of animals

- Greater job satisfaction
- Greater community satisfaction
- Todd Stosuy, Field Services Manager, County of Santa Cruz, CA, USA
Proactive Community Animal Control
- <http://www.g2z.org.au/6th-national-g2z-summit-2015.html>
AIAM invited speaker/workshop 2016



5. Help people comply with desexing/breeder permit laws

- ACT, Tas, WA, SA, NSW legislated requirements to desex cats or pay for an annual permit to keep an undesexed cat.
- State Govt & Councils should support those in the community who have limited capacity to comply with this legislation



Is your cat desexed?

Do you have a breeder permit?

Changes to Gold Coast City Council animal management legislation now require residents who intend to breed their cat or dog, to obtain a breeder permit from council.

To reduce numbers of unwanted and euthanased pets at local pounds, GCCC, with the national Desexing network (NDN) and the Animal Welfare League Qld, is running a subsidised desexing program.

**Contact the National Desexing Network (NDN)
to find out if you are eligible 07 5509 9001**

Desexing vouchers for female cats at participating Gold Coast veterinarians. NDN also has information on discounted desexing for dogs and male cats.

* conditions apply

The desexing program is an initiative of the Gold Coast City Council and Queensland State Government working with AWLLQ and NDN.

**Desex your
female cat**

with the subsidy
for only

\$40*



6. Reduces nuisance issues

- Fewer unwanted animals born means fewer stray wandering animals.
- This means fewer issues for non-pet owners as well as pet owners.



7. Cooperative Desexing Programs also Prevent Unowned Cats

SA Study 2014 -

- 46% of owned cats are not contained to their property at all times.
- Less than half of owned cats are desexed at 3-6 months
- Undesexed wandering cats can therefore breed & contribute to the unowned cat population



Both Environmental & Animal Management Depts benefit

Because both departments benefit a Cooperative Desexing Program could be co-funded by both departments.





8. The community can and will help if a more ethical approach is used

- Compassionate members of the community are keen to adopt or rehome stray and unsocialised cats, if they have access to low cost/free desexing
- Many of these frightened cats can become rewarding companions

9. Local face to face support

With NDN managing all the calls, voucher issue and vet payments, Animal Management Officers can:

- Visit residents in low socio-economic areas such as Permanent Caravan Parks, housing estates, older members of the community to offer vouchers and help get their cats to the vet e.g. provide carriers & transport
- Encourage semi-owners who are feeding stray cats to take ownership with free / low cost desexing, microchipping & registration
- Support people who are willing to desex and care for a colony of unowned cats in an urban area, til their numbers reduce



What's great about proactive Cooperative Desexing Programs

- Reduced costs to Councils
- Positive & ethical outcomes for
 - local governments
 - owners and carers in need
 - non-owners
 - vets
 - cats and dogs
 - wildlife

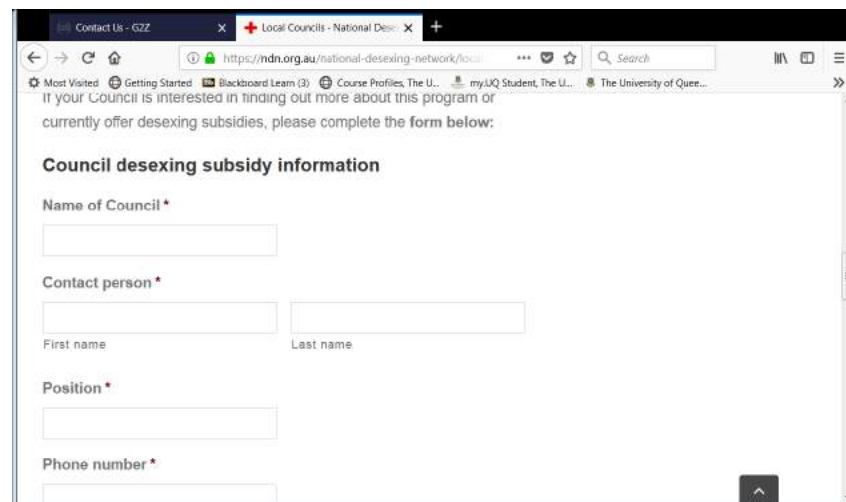
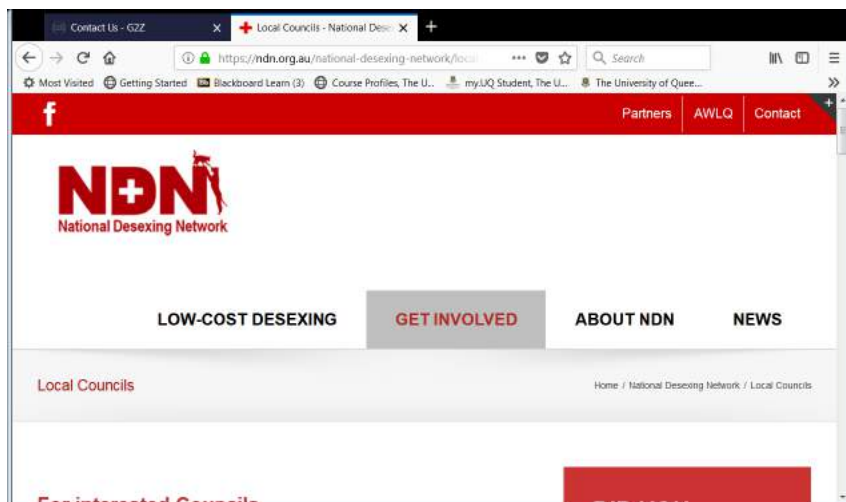


Promoting Availability of ALL Desexing Programs

- The NDN Directory promotes **all desexing programs** run by Councils and organisations around Australia
- **Cooperative Desexing Programs** are offered when there are no effective ongoing existing programs



Register your interest in a Cooperative Desexing Program or list your own desexing program for promotion through the NDN Website www.ndn.org.au





Contact

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