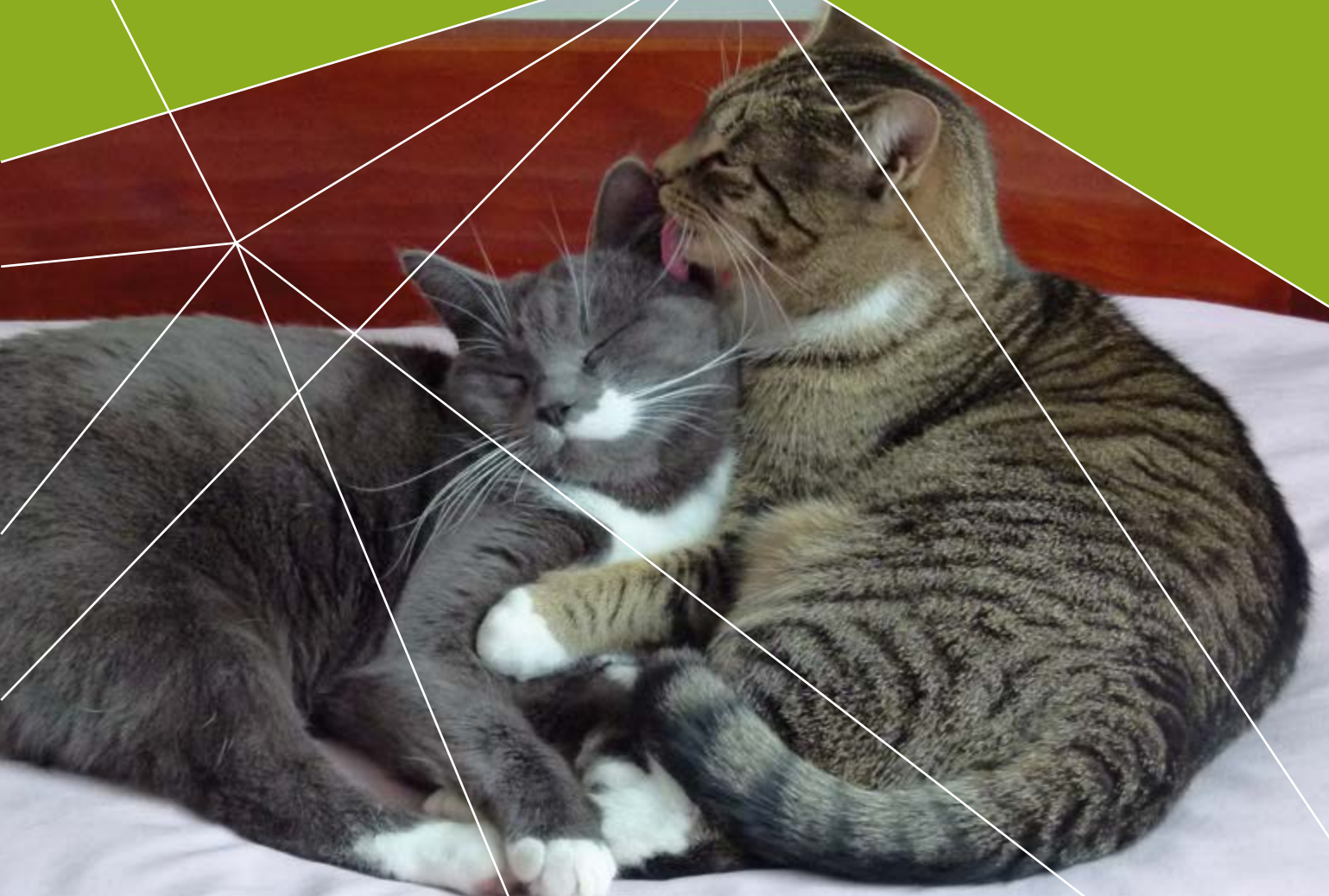




ACT
Government

DRAFT ACT CAT PLAN 2019-29

A PLAN DEVELOPED UNDER THE 2017
ACT ANIMAL WELFARE AND
MANAGEMENT STRATEGY



The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate and the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate welcome comments on this draft plan.

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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTERS

Canberrans love animals, be they pets or native wildlife. This draft ACT Cat Plan (draft plan) is seeking community views on how we can all better manage cats in the ACT for the health, welfare and safety of both domestic cats and native animals.

About a quarter of Canberra households own cats, which are important companion animals. At the same time, our suburbs and many nature reserves are rich in wildlife. Most of us live close to nature, with all its benefits, but this means native wildlife is more vulnerable to predation by wandering cats.

The ACT Government understands that managing cats is complex, particularly since we need to consider the needs of pet cats as well as cats that have little or no interaction with people. Indeed, the cat population is made up of an inter-connected network, which can be characterised as owned, semi-owned and un-owned, and feral cats.

Cat management can be an emotional subject and this draft plan is for the entire community to discuss a broad range of cat management issues, including cat containment, cat registration, compliance and enforcement, desexing, control of feral cats, management of cats on farms and many other issues.

Successful implementation of the final ACT Cat Plan will require a shared vision and understanding of how cats are managed in the ACT over the longer term. Without community support and participation, there will continue to be animal welfare issues associated with unowned and unwanted cats. The impact of roaming and feral cats on the environment will remain significant.

We encourage you to provide your views and ideas on this draft plan, and any other related issues you consider important. This will help us finalise a plan that will guide cat management in the ACT over the next decade.



Mick Gentleman, MLA
Minister for Environment and Heritage



Chris Steel, MLA
Minister for City Services



MESSAGE FROM THE CONSERVATOR

Cats are great pets and highly valued companions. We have a duty to care for their health and wellbeing. This draft plan discusses how we can best look after our cats while also reducing problems of cat predation on native wildlife.

Australia is home to some of the most incredible wildlife and plants on the planet. Changes to the landscape as a result of human activity have put many of these extraordinary species at risk. Predation by feral cats has already directly contributed to extinctions of more than 20 Australian mammals. In recent years, small carnivorous marsupials, including two species of antechinus and a dunnart, have disappeared from many of the Canberra nature parks where they once were common. Today, these animals only thrive behind the cat and fox proof fence at Mulligan's Flat Woodland Sanctuary.

A Canberra research project (Barratt 1998)¹ estimated that free roaming but owned Canberra cats preyed on 61,000 native birds, 2000 native mammals, 30,000 native reptiles and 6000 native frogs each year.

The Cat Plan is responding to this threat in the ACT, while also considering animal welfare and community wishes. I encourage you to contribute to the discussion. Cats do, and can continue to, provide a great benefit to our society provided owners are responsible and management minimises potential adverse impacts.

Ian Walker

Conservator of Flora and Fauna

1 Barratt, D.G. (1998). Predation by house cats, *Felis catus* (L.), in Canberra, Australia. II. Factors affecting the amount of prey caught and estimates of the impact on wildlife. *Wildlife Research - WILDLIFE RES.* 25. 10.1071/WR97026.

KEY TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

VISION AND OBJECTIVES

What are your views on the vision, “All cats in the ACT will be owned, wanted and cared for by responsible owners” and the twin objectives of 1. Caring for pet cats through responsible cat ownership; and 2. Protecting wildlife from cat predation?

STRATEGY 1 PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE CAT OWNERSHIP

Do cat owners currently know responsibilities to desex, micro-chip and contain their cat in declared areas?

How important is community education on responsible cat ownership? How could this be improved?

What role could citizen science play in improving cat management?

What are the barriers to people desexing their cat?

STRATEGY 2 IMPROVE COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT OF CAT LAWS

How important is compliance and enforcement in relation to desexing, microchipping and cat containment?

Should there be more emphasis on enforcing cat laws? How?

Should compulsory cat registration be introduced?

STRATEGY 3 REDUCE NUMBER OF SEMI-OWNED AND UNOWNED DOMESTIC CATS

What should happen to cats that are not microchipped and not desexed and located in public places?

What role could individuals, groups or organisations have in managing semi-owned and unowned domestic cats?

STRATEGY 4 CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE CAT WELFARE AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Do we have appropriate codes of practice and standard operating procedures to guide cat management in the ACT? Is there adequate awareness of these?

Are current cat facilities/shelters adequate? If not, what are the greatest area/s of need?

STRATEGY 5 EXPAND CAT CONTAINMENT

The ACT Government has committed to investigate options for expanding cat containment areas in the ACT. How can cat containment areas most effectively be expanded? Options include:

A. Phasing-in approach – gradually add additional suburbs over time

B. Grandfathered approach – require newly owned cats to be contained

C. Blanket approach – declare all established suburbs cat containment at the one time at a set future date.

STRATEGY 6 REDUCE IMPACTS OF FERAL CATS

Should the impact of feral cats be listed under the ACT Nature Conservation Act 2014 as a threat to the environment?

Where and how should feral cat control programs be undertaken?

STRATEGY 7 ENGAGE RURAL LANDHOLDERS IN IMPROVED CAT MANAGEMENT

How should we improve management of cats in rural areas, including domestic and feral cats?

How can we reduce risks to agriculture, including disease to livestock?

Should mandatory cat containment extend to rural areas?

Is there sufficient understanding of how to control vermin if cat containment is expanded to rural areas?

STRATEGY 8 REDUCE RISKS TO HUMAN HEALTH

Is further action required to manage risks to human health? If so, what are priorities for action?



OVERVIEW

WHY DO WE NEED AN ACT CAT PLAN?

Cats play an important but complex role in our society. While pet cats bring health and wellbeing benefits to their owners, all cats have a natural instinct to hunt other animals and feral cats need to hunt for survival.

The ACT has legislation, strategies, plans and codes of practice to guide management of animals and protect the natural environment, including the Animal Welfare and Management Strategy 2017– 2022 (Strategy) and action plans for recovery of threatened species.

Development of a management plan for cats will meet a priority under Action 4.1.2 of the five-year Strategy that commenced in 2017:

Action 4.1.2 Develop and implement policies and management plans to promote responsible pet ownership and reduce the impact of domestic species on the environment and the community.

This draft plan is to engage the community on how we manage cats in the future to:

- » improve animal welfare and environmental outcomes
- » provide people with more certainty, including any future requirements on cat owners
- » improve systems and implement more effective approaches to managing domestic cats (owned, semi-owned and unowned) and undertaking feral cat control.

The vision, objectives, strategies and actions set a clear direction for the future and are designed to:

- » build on existing legislation
- » align with the ACT's nature conservation, animal welfare and human health policies
- » support national approaches to cat management, including control of feral cats.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the draft plan is to engage the community on how we work together to improve our laws, services and programs for managing all cats—domestic and feral—in the ACT. Cats that are not responsibly owned are at risk of harm to themselves and continue to harm native wildlife.

All cats are the same species (*Felis catus*); however, for management purposes it is useful to define cat populations using different categories. RSPCA Australia defines cats as either feral or domestic and further separates domestic cats into three sub-categories (owned, semi-owned and unowned) based on a cat's relationship with humans. See Box 1.

The draft plan recognises the different roles and impacts cats have in the ACT, ranging from much loved companions to an introduced animal that poses risks to wildlife.

BOX 1: CATEGORIES OF CATS FOR MANAGEMENT PURPOSES

Domestic—all cats with some dependence (direct or indirect) on humans. There are three sub-categories of domestic cats:

Owned—these cats are identified with and cared for by a specific person, and are directly dependent on humans. They are usually sociable although sociability varies.

Semi-owned—these cats are fed or provided with other care by people who do not consider they own them. They are of varying sociability with many socialised to humans and may be associated with one or more households.

Unowned—these cats are indirectly dependent on humans with some having casual and temporary interactions with humans. They are of varying sociability, including some who are unsocialised to humans, and some may live in groups (e.g. common aggregation sites including rubbish tips, food outlets, coastal fishing spots associated with urban environments etc.).

Feral—these cats are unowned, unsocialised, have no relationship with or dependence on humans, and reproduce in the wild.
(RSPCA, 2018, p.20)

VISION

All cats in the ACT will be owned, wanted and cared for by responsible owners.

OBJECTIVES

This draft plan presents a framework based on this vision. The vision recognises the important role of cats as pets and that people have responsibilities for animal welfare and protecting native wildlife.

The draft plan has twin objectives:

1. Caring for pet cats through responsible cat ownership
2. Protecting wildlife from cat predation

KEY TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

What are your views on the draft plan's vision and objectives?

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

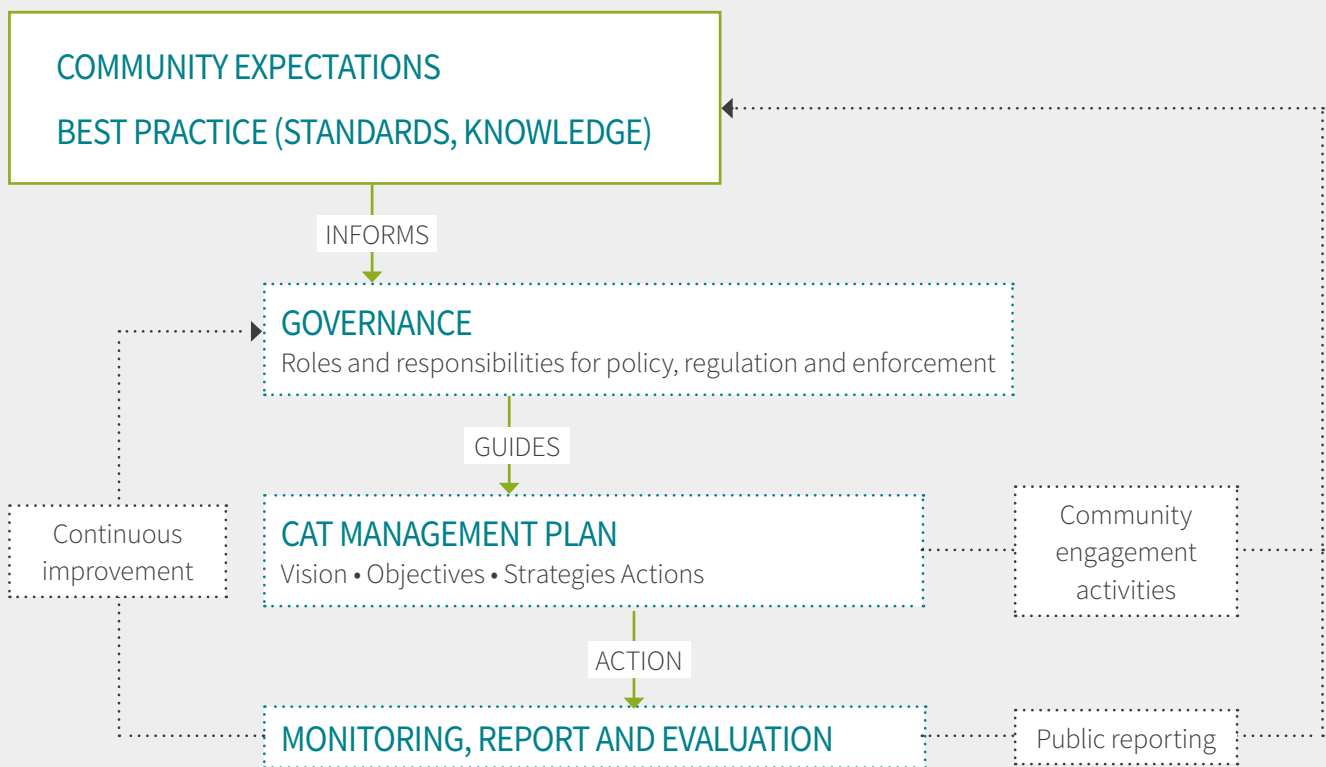
Improving cat management in the ACT requires a shared commitment by government and the community. Nearly everyone has a stake in how cats are managed, including cat owners, neighbours, people involved in the pet industry, veterinarians, conservationists, animal welfare and rescue organisations, community groups and rural landholders. Community feedback will help inform a final plan to be implemented by the government, in collaboration with key stakeholders, over the next ten years.

Key stakeholder	Roles and responsibilities
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate development and periodic review of the ACT Cat Plan and relevant legislation. • Monitor compliance and enforce relevant legislation. • Coordinate education activities to raise awareness within the community of cat management.
Cat owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legally required to microchip and desex their cat. • In declared cat containment areas, legally required to contain their cats.
Breeders and sellers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required to have a licence to breed for commercial gain. • Must provide a licence number when advertising cats for sale.
Pet shops and pet supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source of information and products for cat care and may sell pet cats.
Animal care and rescue organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide education, advice, foster care, re-homing of rescued animals. • Humanely euthanase unwanted cats.
Not-for-profit animal organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide various cat management and welfare services, including services for vulnerable animals. For example, Canberra Cat Fix and Pet Assistance and Wellbeing Service (PAWS).
Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RSPCA Australia advocates for improved animal welfare and management practices. • RSPCA ACT, partly funded through an agreement with the ACT Government, provides animal care and rescue services in the ACT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Services including accepting and housing stray and surrendered cats » Provide an inspectorate service to enforce the provisions of the Animal Welfare Act 1992.
ACT Veterinary Surgeons Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ACT Veterinary Surgeons Board is a statutory body responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » registration of suitably qualified veterinary surgeons and veterinary specialists » monitoring of the best practice standards and conduct of the profession.
Australian Veterinary Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) is the professional organisation that represents veterinarians across Australia. AVA members are committed to continuing education and abide by the Code of Professional Conduct.
Veterinary practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide care and treatment of pets, including desexing services.
Conservation Council ACT and Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocates for, campaigns for and engages with the community to safeguard the environment for future generations and strongly supports improved cat management.
Rural landholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural land management, including pest animal control. • Manage owned or semi-owned cats on their properties.
Conservation volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May participate in citizen science around cat management.
ACT residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All residents can contribute to the improved management of cats.

IMPLEMENTATION

The approach to implementing the draft plan is based on the framework for continuous improvement outlined in the Animal Welfare and Management Strategy 2017–22 (Figure 1).

Figure 1.: Framework for continuous improvement



Primarily, two ACT Government directorates—Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) and Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development (EPSDD)—are responsible for implementing actions within the plan, including through partnerships with service providers, such as the RSPCA ACT, and other organisations and community groups.

TRANSPORT CANBERRA AND CITY SERVICES DIRECTORATE

TCCS is responsible for administering the [Domestic Animals Act 2000](#) and the [Animal Welfare Act 1992](#). TCCS provides domestic animal management services to the ACT community, including dog registration, nuisance and attack investigations, collection of stray and roaming dogs, cat containment, community engagement and education, and management of the domestic animals shelter.

ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

EPSDD is responsible for administering the [Nature Conservation Act 2014](#), [Pest Plants and Animals Act 2005](#), and [Planning and Development Act 2007](#). Responsibilities include the Parks and Conservation Service, nature conservation policy, conservation research, environment and rural programs and biosecurity.

STRATEGY AND ACTIONS

The proposed strategies and accompanying actions are outlined below.

Strategy	Action	Implementers
1. Promote responsible cat ownership	1 Promote responsible cat ownership through community education and engagement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve information available to cat owners on keeping a cat and meeting all its needs. 	EPSDD, TCCS, AWAC, RSPCA—ACT, peak bodies, breeders and sellers, animal care and rescue groups, pet shops.
	2 Raise awareness of cat behaviour through citizen science. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cat tracking Canberra Nature Map 	EPSDD, conservation volunteers, cat owners
	3 Improve cat desexing rates by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> working with community partners such as vets and animal shelters to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increase access to affordable desexing increase uptake of microchipping and pre-pubescent desexing prior to sale, transfer or return working with veterinary professionals and other stakeholders to support cat owners in meeting requirements for pre-pubescent desexing. 	TCCS, Breeders and sellers, Vets, RSPCA ACT, Animal care and rescue organisations
2. Improve compliance and enforcement	4 Explore improved systems for cat identification and reunification with owners, including the introduction of cat registration, as part of a pet registration model.	TCCS
	5 Implement a program of compliance and enforcement in concert with a public education campaign, using a system of warnings and information. Pursue repeat offenders for offences against the Domestic Animals Act 2000 .	TCCS
3. Reduce number of semi-owned and unowned domestic cats	6 Provide information to the community to increase awareness about the environmental and welfare implications of abandonment and feeding wandering cats.	EPSDD, TCCS
	7 Encourage people currently feeding cats they do not own to determine if the cat is owned and, if not, either adopt and care for the cat (including microchipping and desexing the cat) or take the cat to an animal shelter	TCCS
	8 Work with animal care and rescue organisations to manage semi-owned and unowned cats in public places through ‘trap, desex and adopt’ activities.	TCCS
	9 Consider strengthening laws and penalties for abandoning cats.	TCCS
4. Continuously improve domestic cat welfare and management practices	10 Develop and adopt model Codes of Practice (CoPs) and Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) for the humane treatment of domestic cats, including under the Animal Welfare Act	TCCS, AWAC
	11 Review and implement CoPs, SoPs and memoranda of understanding (MOU)/agreements with external service providers for the operation of cat management facilities.	TCCS, AWAC
	12 Provide up to date information to practitioners responsible for implementing domestic cat management so that they understand animal welfare impacts (humaneness) of available methods and the best approaches for to carry them out.	TCCS, RSPCA—ACT, EPSDD
	13 Facilitate provision of adequate cat management facilities/shelters to support: finding and reclaiming of lost cats; adoption and re-homing; and compliance and enforcement.	TCCS

Strategy	Action	Implementers
5. Expand cat containment	14 Encourage the uptake of voluntary cat containment through the provision of information, education and awareness raising on ‘benefits to cats’, ‘benefits to wildlife’ and ‘how to cat contain’.	All
	15 Consider options for how and when to expand the area of compulsory cat containment.	TCCS
	16 Expand area declared (mandatory) cat containment.	TCCS
	17 Review definitions of cat containment in legislation to allow cats to be contained ‘on leash’.	TCCS
6. Reduce impacts of feral cats	18 Educate people about Australian wildlife and the impacts of cats.	EPSDD
	19 Consider listing predation by feral cats as a Key Threatening Process under the Nature Conservation Act 2014 and, subject to listing, prepare an ACT Action Plan for Feral Cats.	EPSDD
	20 Participate in regional and national research and trials to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve monitoring and understanding of cat impacts, including risks to native wildlife improve efficacy and humaneness of feral cat control methods and expand available methods. 	EPSDD
	21 Undertake feral cat control where feasible, cost-effective and provides highest conservation benefit as part of integrated pest animal management.	EPSDD
	22 Increase cat-free conservation areas by expanding predator-proof fences in nature reserves.	EPSDD
7. Engage rural landholders in improved cat management	23 Undertake awareness raising and training of rural landholders regarding cat management on rural properties, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> responsible cat ownership impacts of cats on agriculture and methods for limiting transmission of parasites and disease to livestock pest control methods including feral cats and vermin (rats and mice). 	EPSDD
	24 Engage with rural landholders and animal care and rescue organisations on managing wandering domestic cats on rural properties.	EPSDD
	25 Consider options for expanding cat containment to rural areas.	TCCS
	26 Work with rural landholders to reduce the impact of feral cats on the environment.	EPSDD
8. Reduce risks to human health	27 Raise public awareness about how to reduce risk of infection from cats.	EPSDD, Health

TIMEFRAMES FOR IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

The draft plan identifies timeframes for implementing actions: short-term (1–2 years), medium-term (3–5 years) or longer term (6–10 years), while recognising that some actions may be ongoing, such as awareness raising. It is proposed to implement the actions in the plan over the next decade in three stages.

SHORT TERM (1–2 YEARS)

- » Promote responsible cat ownership and build community awareness (actions 1, 2, 6, 7, 23, 27)
- » Improve desexing rates in partnership with community organisations (action 3)
- » Improve animal welfare and management systems (actions 4, 10, 11, 12)
- » Encourage voluntary cat containment and consider how, where and when to expand declared area (actions 14, 15)
- » Increase cat-free conservation area—extend predator proof fence (action 22)

MEDIUM TERM (3–5 YEARS)

- » Enhance compliance and enforcement (actions 5, 13)
- » Improve management of semi-owned and unowned cats (action 8)
- » Educate, plan and research to support feral cat control (actions 18, 19, 20)
- » Work with rural landholders to improve management of domestic cats (actions 24, 25)
- » Review legislation (actions 9, 17)

LONGER TERM (6–10 YEARS)

- » Expand area of cat containment (actions 16, 26)
- » Improve feral cat control (actions 21)

MONITORING, REPORTING AND REVIEW

Information will be gathered to improve our understanding about trends in the uptake of responsible pet ownership.

Data on desexing, microchipping, cat containment, euthanasia and nuisance levels will be collected from:

- » ACT's Domestic Animal Services
- » service providers including RSPCA ACT
- » surveys, queries received through Access Canberra and complaints.

Monitoring and research on the impact of roaming cats, including feral cats, will continue to be undertaken within the ACT and nationally. Citizen science and other monitoring techniques such as use of wildlife cameras in nature reserves will help inform this.

Annual reporting on progress in implementing actions will occur through annual reports prepared by directorates.

Progress will be monitored at the end of five years to identify which actions are on-track, which actions need more attention and/or resources to be achieved in a timely way and which actions need to be refined.

The ACT Cat Plan, including its implementation and outcomes, will be evaluated towards the end of the 10-year plan.



CATS IN THE ACT

It has been estimated that about a quarter of Canberra households own a cat (Eyles and Mulvaney 2010).

Although cats are required by law to be microchipped, data is not centralised and microchipping does not provide a system for monitoring the number of domestic cats. Microchipping is primarily used to identify owners if a cat is lost, injured or taken to an animal shelter.

There are no reliable estimates of the feral cat population; however, wildlife cameras in Namadgi National Park and other ACT nature reserves record many cat sightings. One estimate is one feral cat for every five square kilometres in the Brindabellas, but as many as 90 cats per square kilometre in certain areas, for example, around rubbish tips (Denny and Dickman 2010).

IMPACT ON WILDLIFE

Hunting and killing is a natural instinct for cats, with many studies showing that the majority of domestic cats do hunt when given the opportunity. Approximately half of Canberra suburbs are located within 500 metres of threatened fauna habitat, and a further 25% are within 1 kilometre. A survey of Canberra cat owners in 1993-94 found that 75% of owned cats hunted, with 64% of prey being rodents, 14% native birds and 10% introduced birds and a few reptiles and frogs (Barratt 1997)².

While there is no direct evidence that domestic cats in urban areas have caused the decline of any threatened species in Australia, there is an increasing body of evidence that predation by feral cats is a major threat to biodiversity in Australia.

Feral cats are found across most of the land mass of Australia; the most recent review estimates a population fluctuating between 2.1 and 6.3 million (Legge et al. 2017). Their presence has contributed to the extinction of 22 Australian mammals (Woinarski et al. 2015a) and they are believed to be a current and major threat to at least 142 species of mammals, reptiles, frogs and birds (Australian Government 2014; Woinarski et al. 2017b).

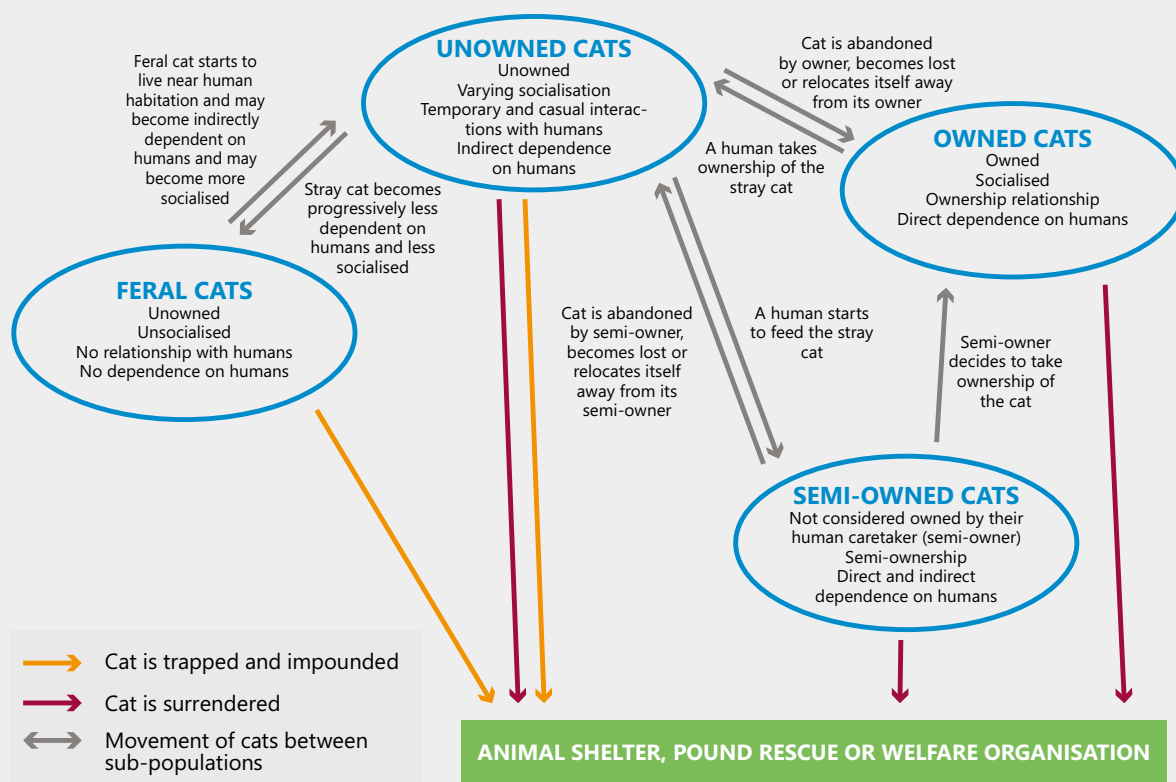
The welfare impact of cat predation, including suffering and maiming of hunted animals, is also a consideration.

HOW DIFFERENT TYPES OF CAT INTERACT

The inter-connections between different categories of cats, as well as their interactions with humans, is described in Figure 2. To manage feral cats effectively, the entire cat population must be managed in an integrated way.

To provide clear guidance for managing the cat population, the commonly used term 'stray cats' (which may apply to some owned, semi-owned and feral cats) has been avoided in describing the 27 Actions in this plan.

Figure 2: Categories of cats and their interactions with humans (RSPCA, 2018, p.19).



² DG Barratt, Predation by House Cats, *Felis catus* (L.), in Canberra, Australia. I. Prey Composition and Preference: *Wildlife Research* [Wildl. Res.], vol. 24, no. 3, pp. 263-277, 1997.

A photograph of two cats wearing blonde wigs. One cat is in the foreground, wearing a wig and has its eyes closed, appearing to be asleep. The other cat is behind it, also wearing a wig and looking towards the camera. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

The draft plan is framed around eight strategies that identify priority actions to be implemented. Several of the issues and proposed actions are interrelated and the draft plan will be more effective if implemented as a whole.

STRATEGY 1:

Promote responsible cat ownership

It is important that people who choose to own a cat understand their responsibilities. The notion of being responsible relates to people caring for the health and wellbeing of their cat, as well as taking responsibility for their cat's impact on wildlife and the nuisance it may cause other people (Box 2).

In the ACT, responsible pet ownership is promoted through a range of public awareness activities, in particular pamphlets and [web-based information](#), with a focus on encouraging cat owners to:

- » de-sex their cat to avoid unwanted kittens
- » microchip their cat to make it easier to reunite the cat with its owner
- » contain their cat to their premises to benefit the environment and their cat's own health—and to comply with legislation in cat containment areas.

While all owned cats over three months old are required by law to be desexed, except where the owner has a permit to keep a sexually entire cat (e.g. for breeding purposes), there is no accurate information on the rate of desexing in the ACT.

Incentives can play an important role in complementing regulatory approaches. Ways to encourage desexing and containing cats will be explored by the government, including to improve affordability for people on low incomes and through transitional periods (for example, to encourage adoption of semi-owned cats).

Some vets and non-government organisations have supported discounted microchipping for cat owners and run programs to encourage desexing such as Fix your Feline (<https://www.rspca-act.org.au/fix-your-feline>). Engagement of veterinary practitioners is central to increasing desexing rates and prepubescent desexing.

In the ACT, a permit is required for a person to keep four or more cats. Limiting the number of cats aims to prevent kitten farms and animal hoarding.

Many cat owners contain their cat voluntarily to protect the pets' wellbeing and to protect native wildlife. The more time a pet cat spends at home, the less risk of injury or death from road accidents, fighting and disease. A pet cat kept safe at home usually lives longer than a cat that is allowed to wander.

Citizen science can be very powerful in increasing community understanding and engagement. Citizen science usually involves the collection and analysis of data relating to the natural environment by volunteers, typically as part of a collaborative project with professional scientists. For example, the Cat Tracker project conducted by the University of South Australia has raised awareness of cat behavior, including the distances uncontained owned cats roam. Canberra Nature Map is a popular local mobile phone app for reporting sightings of native plants and animals as well as introduced species such as cats.

BOX 2: CURRENT CAT LAWS

What are the legal obligations of cat owners?

- » A cat must be microchipped by 12 weeks of age.
- » All cats over the age of three months must be desexed unless the owner has a permit to keep a sexually entire cat.
- » A person must have a licence to keep four or more cats.
- » Cats in cat containment areas must be confined to the owner's/keeper's premises at all times.

What is a cat containment area?

A [cat containment area](#) refers to all or part of a suburb, where cats must be confined to their keeper's or carer's premises at all times.

What are requirements for cat breeders?

- » A licence is required to breed from a female cat.

It is an offence to sell a cat that is over the age of three months that is not desexed.

ACTIONS

Action 1

Promote responsible pet ownership through community education and engagement.

- » Improve information available to cat owners on keeping a cat and meeting all its needs.

Action 2

Raise awareness of cat behaviour through citizen science. Examples include:

- » [Cat Tracker](#)
- » [Canberra Nature Map](#)

Action 3

Improve cat desexing rates by:

- » working with community partners such as vets and animal shelters to:
 - increase access to affordable desexing
 - increase uptake of microchipping and pre-pubescent desexing prior to sale, transfer or return
- » working with veterinary professionals and other stakeholders to support cat owners in meeting requirements for pre-pubescent desexing.



KEY TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

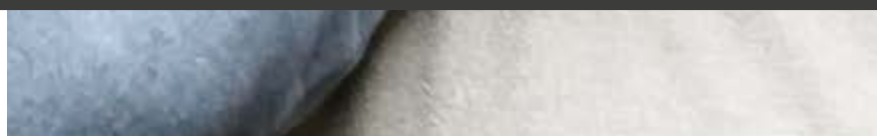
The draft plan places a lot of emphasis on cats being pets that are to be cared for by responsible owners.

Do cat owners currently know their responsibilities to desex, micro-chip and contain their cat in declared areas?

How important is community education on responsible cat ownership? How could this be improved?

What role could citizen science play in improving cat management?

What are the barriers to people desexing their cat?



STRATEGY 2: Improve compliance and enforcement

The ACT Government is committed to improving enforcement of legal requirements for cat owners to desex and microchip cats and contain their cats if they live in a declared cat containment area. Desexing is central to reducing the number of unwanted cats. The ACT was the first jurisdiction to introduce compulsory desexing (under the Domestic Animals Act). Microchipping is important for identifying and contacting cat owners.

There is currently no requirement to register a cat in the ACT; however, the Animal Welfare and Management Strategy 2017–22 (the Strategy) included an action to improve animal management systems and processes for animal identification and reunification, including through registration systems. Registration would provide accurate data regarding the domestic cat population that would help the government and associated groups provide targeted and appropriately-resourced services to meet community needs. Cat registration would improve systems for identifying and returning lost cats. While microchipping already does this to some extent, there is currently no incentive or trigger to remind cat owners to update their details.

The time when cats are sold, transferred or returned to owners from a cat shelter provides an opportunity to ensure cat owners are complying with their legal obligations for desexing and microchipping cats. More efficient systems to support compliance and enforcement will be explored.

People who wish to keep four or more cats must apply for a ‘multiple cat licence’. People who wish to breed kittens are required to hold a ‘breeding licence’ and comply with the ‘breeding standard’.

The government recognises the importance of a comprehensive compliance and enforcement framework to support animal management and welfare laws.

An efficient and effective compliance and enforcement framework needs to include:

- » risk-based codes of practice and guidelines
- » community education programs
- » proportionate and escalating penalties for non-compliance.

Voluntary compliance should be encouraged. Where appropriate, initiatives that support positive behaviour, including low-income earners, should complement the regulatory framework.

Organisations responsible for delivering compliance and enforcement activities include TCCS (Box 3), the RSPCA ACT and ACT Police.

A range of compliance and enforcement mechanisms is necessary to underpin effective laws. Measures—including targeted communication and education activities, timely provision of information and advice, persuasion, cooperative assistance and collaboration—are important to:

- » raise awareness of the benefits of and how to comply with legal requirements
- » raise awareness of the potential consequences of non-compliance
- » encourage voluntary take up, for example, of cat containment in suburbs that are not declared as cat containment areas.

Codes of practice for cat management will complement legislation and support compliance.

Where compliance fails, enforcement mechanisms may be used. The government employs a range of mechanisms to ensure enforcement is undertaken in accordance with the law, is effective, proportionate, fair and impartial. Penalties may include suspension or cancellation of licences, fines and criminal prosecution.



BOX 3: DOMESTIC ANIMAL SERVICES (DAS)

DAS is the unit within TCCS responsible for the following services:

- » investigate alleged animal nuisance issues
- » manage and operate the DAS Shelter and impoundment facilities
- » provide advice about keeping animals in residential areas
- » administer and regulate the [Domestic Animals Act 2000](#), which includes enforcing desexing, microchipping and cat containment measures
- » manage abandoned cats
- » appoint staff to investigate, and assist the RSPCA Animal Welfare Inspectorate investigate, any breaches of the [Animal Welfare Act 1992](#)

Some services are delivered through partnership agreements with other organisations, e.g. service funding agreement with RSPCA ACT.

ACTIONS

Action 4:

Explore improved systems for cat identification and reunification with cat owners, including the introduction of cat registration as part of a pet registration model.

Action 5

Implement a program of compliance and enforcement, in concert with a public education campaign, using a system of warnings and information. Pursue repeat offenders for offences against the Domestic Animals Act 2000.

KEY TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Compliance and enforcement mechanisms are necessary to underpin effective laws.

How important is compliance and enforcement in relation to: desexing, microchipping; and cat containment?

Should there be more emphasis on enforcing cat laws? How?

Should cat registration be introduced?

STRATEGY 3: Reduce number of semi-owned and unowned domestic cats

Some people may irregularly feed or allow a cat to shelter at their residence. Some cats may be semi-owned by a number of people.

Unowned cats have fewer and irregular interactions with people but still rely to some degree on people, for example through scavenging food. Semi-owned and unowned cats do not live as long as owned cats and are at higher risk of hunger, illness, injury and disease. Reducing the number of semi-owned and unowned cats is important to minimise indiscriminate breeding, nuisance complaints and wildlife predation.

To achieve the vision for ‘all cats in the ACT to be wanted and cared for by responsible owners’, management of all semi-owned and unowned cats needs to be addressed. Semi-owners of cats are unlikely to comply with legislation requiring owners to desex or microchip their cat.

Community-based programs may be effective in reducing unowned and semi-owned cat populations, including through free or low cost cat desexing and microchipping that may encourage some people to adopt ‘neighbourhood’ cats. However, cats that remain semi-owned or unowned would need to be trapped and relocated to a rescue centre. The government will consider various trapping and de-sexing options to ensure good welfare standards are met.

There is also an important role for education and raising awareness in the community about environmental and welfare implications of abandoning cats and uncontrolled breeding.

“It is also likely that a proportion of stray (unowned) cats were originally unwanted kittens of owned or semi-owned cats (Casey et al. 2009; Marston 2009). Semi-owned cats are under the direct and intentional care of humans but are not considered owned by their carers. Stray (unowned) and semi-owned cats both add to cat overpopulation and predation of wildlife” (RSPCA, 2018 p. 42).



ACTIONS

Action 6

Provide information to the community to increase awareness about the environmental and welfare implications of abandonment and feeding wandering cats.

Action 7

Encourage people currently feeding cats they do not own to determine if the cat is owned and, if not, either adopt and care for the cat (including microchipping and desexing the cat), or take it to a shelter.

Action 8

Work with animal care and rescue organisations to manage semi-owned and un-owned cats in public places through 'trap, desex and adopt' activities.

Action 9

Consider strengthening laws and penalties for abandoning cats.



KEY TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

The ACT cat population includes cats without a clearly identified owner, but depend on people to some degree.

What should happen to cats that are not microchipped, not desexed and located in public places?

What role could individuals, groups, or organisations have in managing semi-owned and unowned domestic cats?

STRATEGY 4: Continuously improve domestic cat welfare and management practices

The ACT Government is committed to continually improving animal welfare and management practices across the ACT as articulated in the Animal Welfare and Management Strategy 2017–22.

The [Animal Welfare Act 1992](#) promotes and protects the welfare, safety and health of animals and ensures the proper and humane care and management of animals. Codes of practice under the Animal Welfare Act promote best practice by guiding organisations and individuals in key areas of animal management.

The government has codes of practice (CoPs) related to cat management that are regularly reviewed. For example, under the Animal Welfare Act, CoPs guide the:

- » humane treatment of cats
- » operation of cat refuge and rescue organisations, including handling of companion animals in pounds and shelters.

The government and RSPCA ACT work together to provide cat management facilities in the ACT, including ensuring practitioners comply with codes of practice and are well trained in standard operating procedures and new management methods. RSPCA ACT and other organisations and groups provide re-homing and rescue services (Box 4). The government is expanding its capability to respond to and manage cat compliance issues, including expansion of the Domestic Animal Services shelter at Symonston to accommodate seized cats.

BOX 4: RSPCA ACT AND OTHER RE-HOMING SERVICES IN THE ACT

RSPCA ACT has operated at Weston Creek since 1957. It has a workforce of about 300 people, 250 of whom are volunteers. RSPCA shelters are the public face of the RSPCA, rescuing, rehabilitating and re-homing thousands of stray, neglected, abused and unwanted animals every year. RSPCA ACT also provides a lost and found service for cats.

Generally, a cat owner can surrender their cat to RSPCA ACT at any time for re-homing. At times, RSPCA ACT may have a waiting list of people wishing to surrender their cat. A surrender fee of \$100 is requested and any belongings go with the cat to its new home.

There are many other local rescue groups which work to rehome cats and domestic animals.

ACTIONS

Action 10

Develop and adopt model Codes of Practice (CoPs) and Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) for the humane treatment of domestic cats, including under the Animal Welfare Act 1992.

Action 11

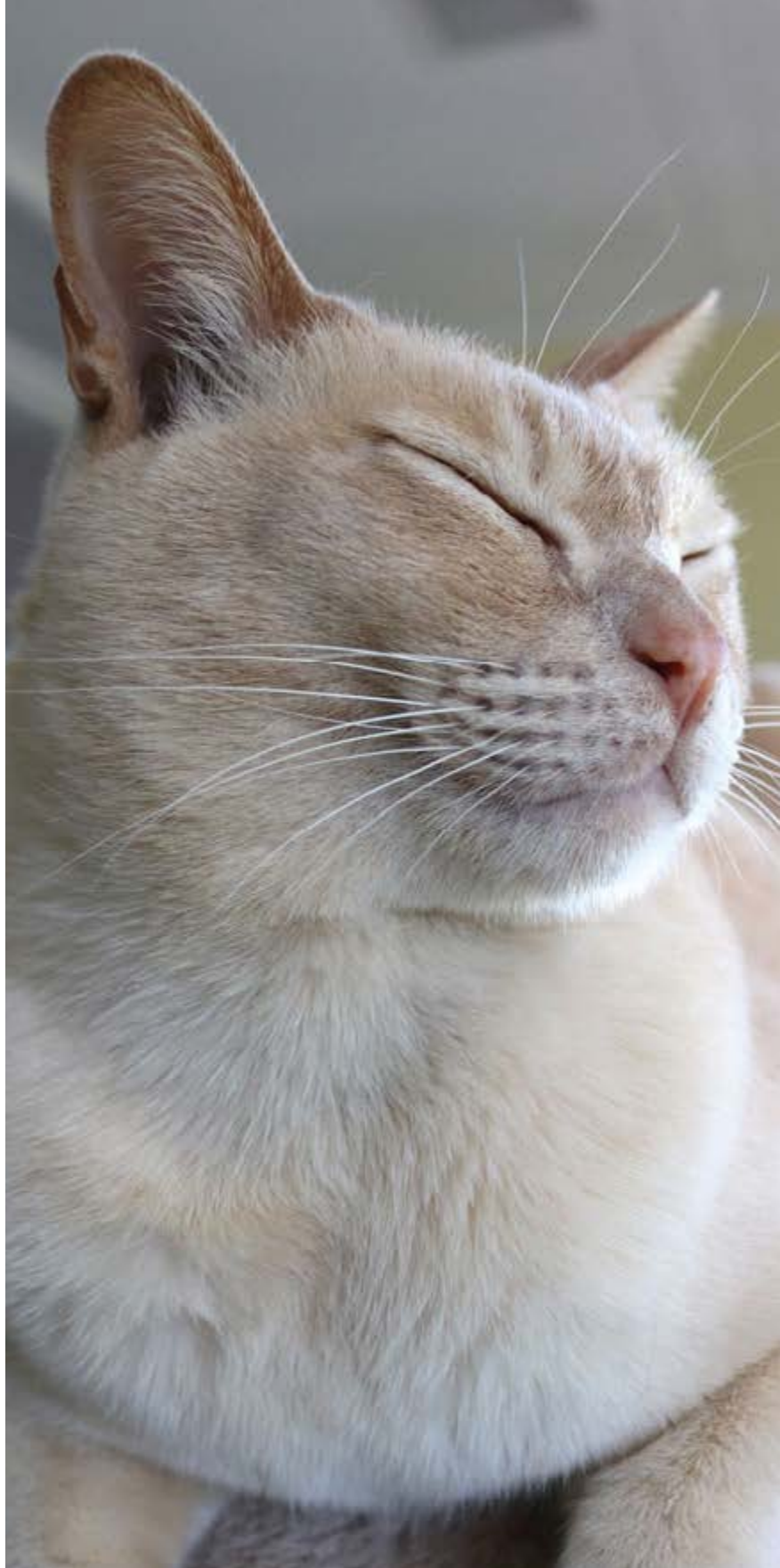
Review and implement CoPs, SoPs and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)/agreements with external service providers for the operation of cat management facilities.

Action 12

Provide up to date information to practitioners responsible for implementing domestic cat management so that they understand animal welfare impacts (humaneness) of available methods and the best approaches for to carry them out.

Action 13

Facilitate provision of adequate cat management facilities/shelters in the ACT to support: finding and reclaiming lost cats; adoption and re-homing; and compliance and enforcement.

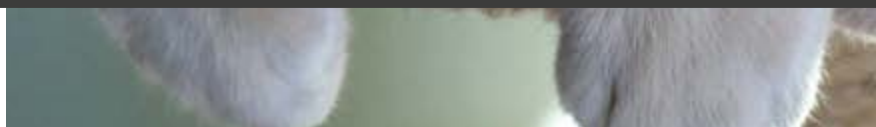


KEY TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Improving animal welfare and management promotes and protects, the health and safety of animals.

Do we have appropriate codes of practice and standard operation procedures to guide cat management in the ACT?
Is there adequate awareness of these?

Are current facilities/shelters adequate? If not, what are the greatest area/s of need?



STRATEGY 5: Expand cat containment

Cat containment is a key policy for reducing the impact of cats on the environment. The policy is supported by many animal welfare groups.

Many people voluntarily contain their cat. The uptake of voluntary cat containment will be encouraged by providing information and education to raise awareness about 'benefits to cats', 'benefits to wildlife' and 'how to cat contain'.

The expected lifespan of owned, domestic cats has been reported as nine to 15 years, with the longest documented lifespan being 31 years. Contained cats tend to live longer due to the reduced chance of misadventure and/or interaction with diseased cats (Comfort 1956).

Existing cat owners may be concerned about containing a cat that has previously been able to roam. Owners and the wider community also recognise the wider environmental benefits of cat containment. Awareness raising and transitional periods can play an important role in alleviating people's concerns.

A transitional period would enable existing cat owners to prepare for cat containment and make more informed decisions. For example, some people may decide to contain their cat voluntarily, while others may choose not to purchase a cat.

Consideration of how cat containment is introduced into established suburbs requires investigation.

Options include:

- A. a phasing-in approach where identified suburbs (or groups of suburbs), or as new suburbs close to wildlife areas, are gradually added to the list of suburbs declared as cat containment areas over time. This is the initial preferred approach of Government, subject to the outcome of this discussion process, to minimise impact on existing cat owners and in consultation with Canberrans.
- B. a grandfathered approach whereby a certain date is established, after which all newly owned cats must be contained throughout the ACT. Cats owned before the date would not have to be contained (unless they live in an existing cat containment area).

- C. a blanket approach with all established suburbs declared as cat containment areas at a set future date, with a transition period (say 5, 10, or 20 years).

The selection of suburbs in the phased approach of Option A would take into account the potential risk to the environment from cat predation (e.g. proximity to nature reserves) and practical implementation considerations (neighbouring suburbs).

Option B could provide an easier transition for cats used to roaming outside, and their families. This option allows for a more natural phase-in of wider cat containment over the lifespan of an average cat. Option B would also enable people to take into account the need to contain their cat when they are considering purchasing or acquiring a new pet cat. Cat containment under this approach could be paired with the registration of all newly owned cats to assist in enforcement of cat containment laws. Cat registration is required in many jurisdictions in Australia and has broader benefits for cats and cat owners. Free registration of already owned cats could be considered.

While the blanket approach of Option C would be simpler to administer and give all residents the same transition period, the Government recognises this could negatively affect cats use to being outside, and have flow on issues for their households.

Some people may wish to walk their cat on a lead in cat containment areas. Legislation change to the definition of cat containment would facilitate this, while noting that laws under the Nature Conservation Act would still not permit cats to be taken into nature reserves and national parks.

Compliance and enforcement of cat containment policy is a high priority under Strategy 2: Improved compliance and enforcement. Consistency across suburbs makes it easier to inform residents and undertake compliance and enforcement.

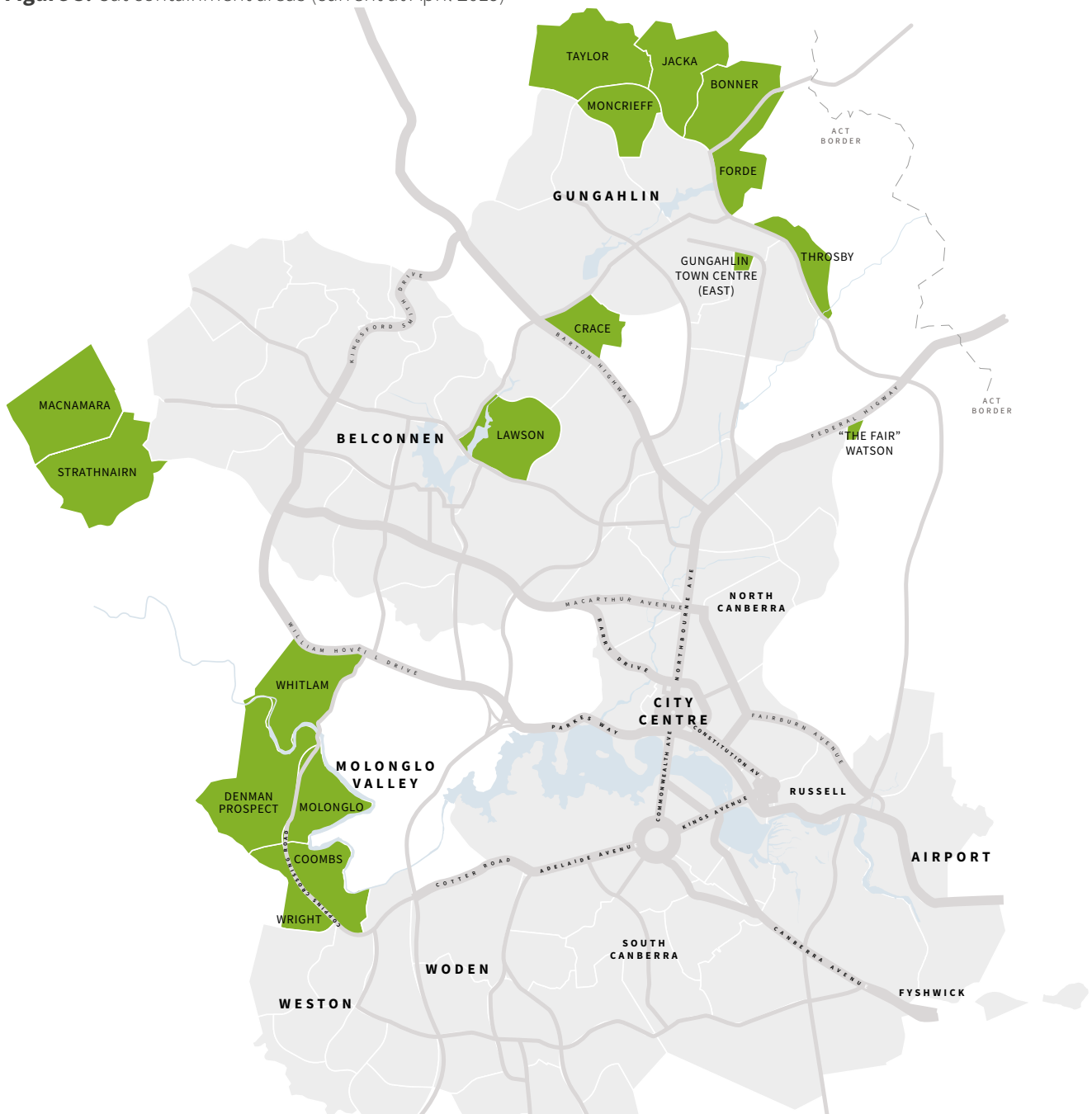
Containing a cat to the owner’s premises is a legal requirement in cat containment areas and may be adopted voluntarily in other areas. The [Domestic Animals Act 2000](#) (Part 3, Division 3.2, s. 81) allows the Minister for Transport Canberra and City Services to declare cat containment areas. Bonner and Forde were the first suburbs declared cat containment areas in 2004.

Since 2011, new suburbs that back onto nature reserves have been declared as cat containment areas; however, to date, the Government has deliberately not introduced cat containment in established suburbs due to impacts on existing cat owners.

Any future expansion of cat containment into established suburbs will reduce impacts of domestic cats on native wildlife, simplify enforcement of cat containment and reduce risks to the health of domestic cats.

As of 2019, 17 areas (Figure 3) have been declared cat containment areas. Declared cat containment areas are shown on [ACTmapi](#).

Figure 3: Cat containment areas (current at April 2019)



ACTIONS

Action 14

Encourage the uptake of voluntary cat containment through the provision of information, education and awareness raising on ‘benefits to cats’, ‘benefits to wildlife’ and ‘how to cat contain’.

Action 15

Consider options for how and when to expand the area of mandatory cat containment.

Action 16

Expand area of declared (mandatory) cat containment.

Action 17

Review definitions of cat containment in legislation, to allow for cats to be contained ‘on-leash’.



KEY TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

The ACT Government has committed to investigate options for expanding cat containment areas in the ACT. How can cat containment areas most effectively be expanded? Options include:

- A. Phasing-in approach – gradually add additional suburbs over time
- B. Grandfathered approach – require newly owned cats to be contained
- C. Blanket approach – declare all established suburbs cat containment at the one time at a set future date

STRATEGY 6: Reduce impacts of feral cats

The potential risks to native wildlife have resulted in 'predation by feral cats' being listed as a Key Threatening Process under the Commonwealth [Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999](#).

While predation on native animals is the main concern, feral cats also impact the environment through competition with native carnivores such as quolls and changes in ecosystem function.

In preparation for the 16 July 2015 Threatened Species Summit, state and territory environment ministers committed to reviewing their jurisdictional arrangements to remove any unnecessary legal impediments to land managers undertaking feral cat control and management, where possible.

The Australian Government Threat Abatement Plan (Box 5) encourages national cooperation and promotes best practice management of feral cats. Listing feral cats as a key threatening process under the [Nature Conservation Act 2014](#) would facilitate preparation of an ACT Action Plan for Feral Cats (Threat Abatement Plan). This would further clarify roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in the ACT and promote improved planning, coordination and collaboration in the ACT urban context, which is quite different from other areas of Australia.

The background document for the Threat Abatement Plan (Department of Environment 2015b) contains information on: feral cat characteristics, biology and distribution; impacts on environmental, social and cultural values; and current management practices and measures. The Threat Abatement Plan is linked closely to the Australian Government's Threatened Species Strategy.

While significant research has provided important insights into how feral cats behave across different landscapes and how that might influence the success or failure of control and trapping programs, further research is required. [For more information, see the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre report](#). In recent years, research effort has increased into new control options that are less labour intensive than trapping or baiting. The ACT Government supports national research through the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions (CISS) and would like to participate in trialling new control methods, including to refine methods for implementation in a semi-urban context. Citizen science projects such as [FeralCatScan](#) also assist in monitoring feral cats.

The ACT Pest Animal Management Strategy 2012–22 provides guidance for reducing the social, environmental and economic damage caused by pest animals on biodiversity, primary production and public amenity. Key objectives of the strategy are to: implement effective measures to reduce pest animal damage; build public awareness and understanding of pest animal issues; and improve land managers' capacity to undertake control programs.

Feral cats are difficult to control; they are widely dispersed and do not take baits readily. In the ACT, feral and roaming domestic cats can also overlap near urban areas. Cat containment keeps pet cats safe, including from the potential risk posed by feral animal control programs.

The ACT Parks and Conservation Service undertakes pest control programs in Namadgi National Park and ACT nature reserves for foxes and wild pigs; however, there are currently no specific feral cat control programs. Feral animal control programs aim to reduce the impact of feral animals on the environment by focussing efforts on:

- » protecting highest value environmental assets
- » trialling and improving the cost-effectiveness of control methods
- » promoting landscape approaches (including cross-tenure) to pest control.

The cost effectiveness of feral cat control programs will be improved by:

- » reducing the flow of domestic cats to the feral cat population
- » controlling reproduction of domestic cats through high desexing rates
- » improving effectiveness of baits or other control methods for use over large areas
- » reducing risk of owned and semi-owned cats being affected by control programs through responsible pet ownership and cat containment.

Territory-wide eradication of feral cats is not feasible with current techniques. Eradication was achieved at Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary due to the predator-proof fence. Expanding the Sanctuary will reduce impacts of feral pest animals, including cats, and allow for successful reintroduction of native wildlife within the larger fenced area (Box 6).

BOX 5: AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT THREAT ABATEMENT PLAN FOR PREDATION BY FERAL CATS

The Threat Abatement Plan for Predation by Feral Cats provides a national framework to guide and coordinate national action to:

- » effectively control feral cats in different landscapes
- » improve effectiveness of existing control options for feral cats
- » develop or maintain alternative strategies for threatened species recovery
- » increase public support for feral cat management and promote responsible cat ownership.

BOX 6: MULLIGANS FLAT WOODLAND SANCTUARY

Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary is part of the ACT's nature reserve system. It is managed by the Woodlands and Wetlands Trust in partnership with the ACT Parks and Conservation Service.

The rabbit, cat and fox proof Sanctuary at Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve was established with the expectation of reintroducing fauna that have become locally extinct. Following construction of the 11.5 kilometre feral-proof fence around the Sanctuary, feral animals were removed including foxes, cats and rabbits. Lost native species were reintroduced, including Eastern Bettongs in 2012 and Eastern Quolls in 2016.

ACTIONS

Action 18

Educate people about Australian wildlife and the impacts of cats.

Action 19

Consider predation by feral cats as a Key Threatening Process under the Nature Conservation Act 2014 and, subject to listing, prepare an ACT Action Plan for Feral Cats.

Action 20

Participate in regional and national monitoring, research and trials to:

- » increase understanding of the feral cat population and impacts on the environment; and
 - » improve efficacy, humaneness and expand available feral cat control methods.
-

Action 21

Undertake feral cat control where feasible, cost-effective and provides highest conservation benefit as part of integrated pest animal management.

Action 22

Increase cat-free conservation areas by expanding predator-proof fences in nature reserves.



KEY TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Feral cats harm the environment by preying on native animals.

Should the impact of feral cats be listed under the ACT Nature Conservation Act 2014 as a threat to the environment?

Where and how should feral cat control programs be undertaken?



STRATEGY 7: Engage rural landholders in improved cat management

Rural properties in the ACT require an integrated approach to management of cats given any one property may have owned, semi-owned, unowned and feral cats living on or visiting it. Responsible cat management on rural properties will reduce impacts on the environment, noting that some rural properties have significant wildlife habitat and/or are close to national park and reserves.

Across Australia, it is not uncommon for 'farm cats' to be fed irregularly or live in the shed. Consultation with ACT rural landholders on this occurrence and ways to promote responsible cat ownership, including pre-pubescent desexing and cat containment, is needed.

While likely to be low risk or minimal, cats can host a number of diseases that affect agricultural livestock. Cats can host and propagate common disease-causing parasites including *Toxoplasma gondii*, *Sarcocystis* and *Cryptosporidium*.

A focus of this draft plan is to work with rural landholders to increase awareness of responsible cat ownership, reduce risks to agriculture and promote integrated pest management across the landscape. Cat management issues could be incorporated into wider natural resource management awareness raising and training for landholders.

The government coordinates pest control with other land managers including rural landholders. Coordinated cat control programs by the Parks and Conservation Service and rural landholders in priority areas will increase the effectiveness of control programs. This could be guided by an ACT Action Plan for Feral Cats. While it is recognised that cats may currently help control vermin by hunting rats and mice, it is considered more appropriate to control vermin by limiting their access to food (grain and food scraps) and use alternative vermin control activities on farms.



ACTIONS

Action 23

Undertake awareness raising and training of rural landholders regarding cat management on rural properties, including:

- » responsible cat ownership;
- » impacts of cats on agriculture and methods for limiting transmission of parasites and disease to livestock; and
- » pest control methods including feral cats and vermin (rats and mice).

Action 24

Engage with rural landholders and animal care and rescue organisations on managing wandering domestic cats on rural properties.

Action 25

Consider options for expanding cat containment to rural areas.

Action 26

ACT Government work with rural landholders to reduce the impact of feral cats on the environment.



KEY TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION


Rural lands cover 15% of the ACT. A single rural property may have owned, semi-owned, unowned and feral cats.

How should we improve management of cats in rural areas, including domestic and feral cats?

How can we reduce risks to agriculture, including health to livestock?

Should mandatory cat containment extend to rural areas?

Is there sufficient understanding of how to control vermin, if cat containment is extended to rural areas?



STRATEGY 8: Reduce risks to human health

Although cats rarely carry germs that make people sick, cat owners should be aware that this can occur. Germs from cats may cause a variety of illnesses in people, from minor skin infections to more serious illnesses.

With routine veterinary care for your cat and some simple health tips, you are less likely to get sick from touching, petting, or owning a cat.

Risks of infection from cats can be reduced by:

- » using gloves when handling cat litter boxes
- » washing hands with soap and water after petting, feeding, handling, or having any other contact with cats, their living quarters, or their litter waste
- » covering any skin wounds before handling your cat
- » keeping cats indoors and away from stray and feral cats
- » only feeding cats commercial cat food or well-cooked table food
- » covering outdoor sandboxes when not in use to avoid cats using these as litter boxes
- » wearing gloves when gardening or working with soil and washing hands promptly afterwards
- » seeking timely veterinarian attention if your cat looks sick or unwell
- » ensuring your cat has all necessary vaccinations and any other regular medication (as advised by a veterinarian)



- » regularly cleaning and vacuuming your house and regularly changing cat litter
- » seeking medical attention if you believe you have contracted an infection from your cat
- » if bitten by a cat, clean the wound immediately with soap and water and seek your doctor's advice on the risk of infection. Cat bites are usually thin and deep and may not look very serious but germs from the cat's mouth may cause infections

Cats can cause allergic reactions and asthma in some people through exposure to cat urine, feline saliva, inhalation of cat dander (dead skin) and exposure to dust, pollen and fur.

Symptoms may include:

- » sneezing
- » runny or stuffy nose
- » coughing, chest tightness, shortness of breath and wheezing
- » watery, red or itchy eyes
- » skin rash

Where you suffer any of these symptoms following contact with your cat, you should discuss your concerns with your GP. You can help reduce your chances of allergic reactions or asthma by ensuring your cat is restricted from your sleeping area, limiting direct contact with your cat (and washing your hands with soap and water after handling your cat), utilising high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) cleaners in your living areas and regularly bathing your cat.

ACTIONS

Action 27
Raise public awareness about how to reduce risk of infection from cats.

KEY TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Cats can pose risks to human health.

Is further action required to manage risks to human health? If so what are priorities for action?

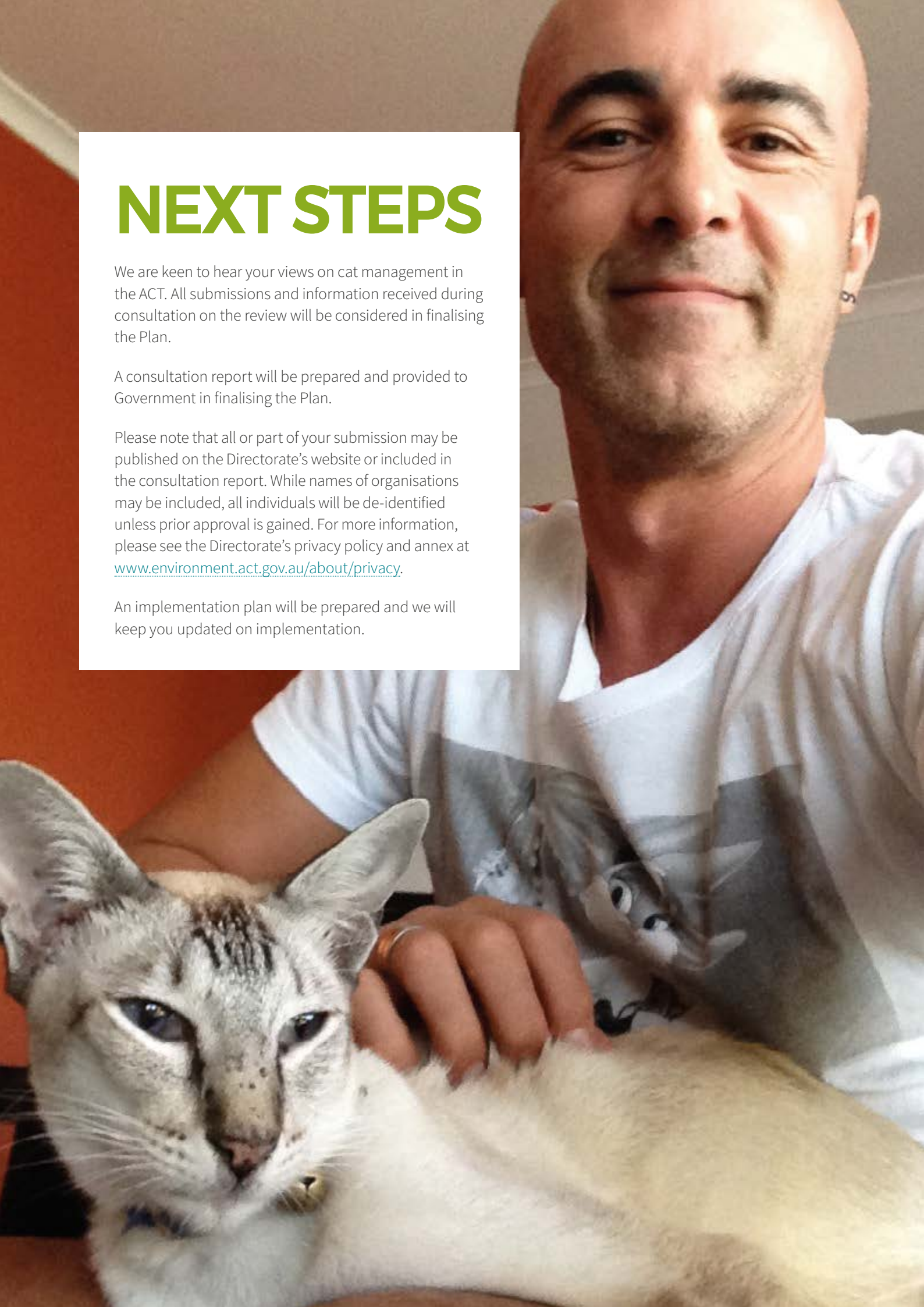
NEXT STEPS

We are keen to hear your views on cat management in the ACT. All submissions and information received during consultation on the review will be considered in finalising the Plan.

A consultation report will be prepared and provided to Government in finalising the Plan.

Please note that all or part of your submission may be published on the Directorate's website or included in the consultation report. While names of organisations may be included, all individuals will be de-identified unless prior approval is gained. For more information, please see the Directorate's privacy policy and annex at www.environment.act.gov.au/about/privacy.

An implementation plan will be prepared and we will keep you updated on implementation.



FURTHER INFORMATION ON CATS AND CAT MANAGEMENT IS AVAILABLE FROM THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES

[ACT Government information on ACT cat owners legal obligations](#)

[ACT Government information on responsible cat ownership](#)

[ACT Pest Animal Management Strategy 2012–20](#)

[ACTmapi - Cat Containment declared areas](#)

[Australian Government Threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats](#)

[Canberra Nature Map](#)

[Cat Tracker Project](#)

[Feral Cat Scan](#)

[Identifying Best Practice Domestic Cat Management in Australia](#)

[Information on Toxoplasmosis](#)

[Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre: Review of cat ecology and management strategies in Australia](#)

[Research on Maximum Ages Reached by Domestic Cats](#)

[Mulligans Flat Woodlands Sanctuary](#)

[RSPCA ACT](#)

[Safe Cat - Safe Wildlife](#)

