



Responsible Cat Ownership

In November 2013 the *Cat Act 2011* came into full effect to ensure responsible cat ownership and to reduce the number of unwanted cats in the community.

As a reminder, this means that all cats over the age of 6 months must be micro-chipped, sterilised and registered with the Local Government where you live.

In addition, cats are required to wear a collar and registration tag, at all times. This will ensure your cat is easily identifiable and therefore can be returned to you if it gets lost. If your cat is wearing a collar and registration tag, people in your neighbourhood will also know the cat is owned and is not a stray cat.

Keeping your cat and our wildlife, safe

Cats that are allowed to roam freely have been known to wander several kilometres from their home, often on a daily basis. Whilst out roaming they are at risk of injury and disease, not to mention their potential impact on our neighbours and wildlife.

By nature, cats are instinctive hunters and although owners are taking care of the needs of their pets, instinctive hunting will still occur. Even well fed cats roaming at night may hunt and kill possums, other small native mammals and reptiles. Birds are often targets at dawn and dusk when they are most active.

Keeping your cat indoors or in a built for purpose cat run will also protect it from fights and the subsequent infection and disease, and also eliminates the risk of your cat being run over or going missing.

Nuisance cats

Much of the feedback received from residents about stray or roaming cats is that they kill wildlife, wander on roads, mark their territory by 'spraying' on people's homes and belongings and fight with other cats. This behaviour is creating a nuisance and potential health issues for neighbours and wider community members.

Containing your cat to your property is the only way to ensure your cat is kept safe and is not creating a nuisance for your neighbours or other residents of the Town, both human and animal.

If a cat is creating a nuisance for you in the Town, the Rangers can help you with our cat-trapping program. If you know who owns the cat, please consider having a chat to them first, in the interests of good neighbourly relations. If this is not possible or you think the cat is a stray, give the Rangers a call on 9377 7480 and we can give you some tips to deter cats or organise one of our humane cat traps for you.

Tips for responsible cat ownership:

- Ensure your cat is sterilised, microchipped and registered with your Local Council,
- Ensure your cat wears its collar and registration tag so it is easily identifiable, bells on the collar are a great addition,
- Ensure your cat stays safe and doesn't create a nuisance, by containing it to your property, especially at night, dawn and dusk.
- Surrender your cat to an animal shelter, cat haven or the RSPCA if you are unable to care for your cat any longer.

Further information

If you are a cat owner and your cat goes missing, if you would like more information on how to be a responsible cat owner, or other tips on how to keep your cat safe and contained to your property, call the Rangers on 9377 7480.