

# Submission to the Review of the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 and Amendments to the Act of 2017

**From: C.A.T.S. Cats Assistance to Sterilise Inc.**

This Submission compares the successful C.A.T.S. Cats Assistance To Sterilise Inc NON-Legislative approach to cat management which virtually halved the numbers of cats going to the main shelters and tripled the numbers of cats being desexed, in 5 years. With

The failed State-Government state-wide forced Legislative approach to cat management which doubled the numbers of cats going to the main shelters and halved the numbers of cats being desexed, in 5 years.

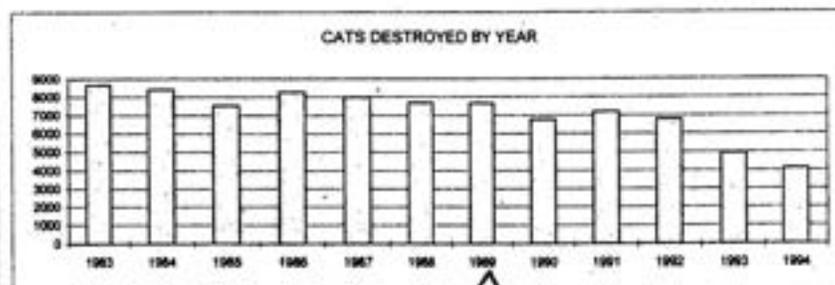
**Cats are not dogs and Legislative controls do not work with cat management as they cannot be enforced.**

The solution is to work with the residents, not against them, through cooperation, correct education and assistance with mass desexing - not legislative force.

TWELVE YEAR REVIEW OF CATS HANDLED BY THE ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
<b>CATTERY:</b>												
Received	10587	10445	9491	10196	10452	10301	9799	9007	8251	9146	7367	6707
Placed	1838	1758	1794	1824	1921	1957	1808	1951	1886	1883	2130	2029
Returned to Owners	19	20	22	18	27	19	28	26	12	29	37	26
Destroyed	8660	8402	7524	8265	7985	7680	7646	6763	7193	6790	4938	4107

**Drop to virtually half after 5 years of C.A.T.S. Inc mass desexing**



**C.A.T.S. was incorporated on 1 November 1989 and in 5 years virtually halved the number of AWL cats received and destroyed**

**Before cat legislation, SA highest desexing in country REARK 1992**

## **Introduction**

Due to the catastrophic failure of the State Government cat legislation by making microchipping mandatory and threatening cat owners and supporters with fines and fees, and plans for compulsory cat confinement, the whole legislative approach for cat management needs to be reviewed and sent back to the drawing board.

Cats are not dogs and cannot be managed like dogs and indeed this has become blatantly obvious over the last nearly 5 years since this legislation was imposed on 1/7/2018, causing a massive drop in desexing and a massive increase in undesexed cats.

Cats cannot be managed by legislation, as has been proved by the minuscule numbers of owned cats, from the estimated 400,000 SA cats, listed on Dog And Cat Online (DACO) as most cat owners and supporters will not comply and there is no way that the legislation can be enforced, as most owners will not microchip and therefore many don't now desex cats either.

**This following Submission from C.A.T.S. Cats Assistance To Sterilise Inc provides information which will be valuable when debating the cat issues on the current Parliamentary Agenda.**

**The Submission also provides the solution to the cat problems as proved by the tangible, substantiated evidence showing that the C.A.T.S. Policy does reduce cat numbers, cat-related problems, and cat impact on native wildlife. C.A.T.S. Policy also complies with the Natural Resources Amendment Act and has been used for the last 32 years with remarkable results.**

C.A.T.S. has organised the desexing of nearly 135,000 cats, for the general public, which is more for the general public than the RSPCA and AWL put together as they do not desex for the general public and has reduced cat numbers and cat-related problems. C.A.T.S. methods have therefore reduced the impact on native wildlife more successfully than any other method.

**The reason why C.A.T.S. is so successful is because we work with the cat owners and supporters, through cooperation, correct education and assistance with desexing, and not against them by using threats, force and imposition of fines, fees and forced confinement.**

Without the support of the residents who care for and manage the cats, nothing constructive will be achieved, and this support will not be forthcoming with threats of fines, fees and compulsory confinement.

We respectfully ask that you read our Submission which follows.

**Submission to the Review of the Dog and Cat  
Management Act 1995 and Amendments to the Act  
of 2017**

**From: C.A.T.S. Cats Assistance to Sterilise  
Inc.**

**THE OUTCOMES WE ARE LOOKING FOR**

**Enforcement of the laws against animal cruelty with punishment to fit the crimes and a ban on breeding catteries in the same manner as a ban on puppy farms.**

The failed Cat legislation, relating to making microchipping mandatory replaced with microchipping as a matter of choice, all threats of fines, fees and compulsory confinement replaced with cooperation, correct education and assistance with desexing through animal orientated organizations, and for councils to work with their residents, not against, them by removing the counterproductive cat bylaws.

Reasons for failure of the current legislation and recommendations, with substantiating evidence, of methods that will achieve the reductions of cat numbers, the reduction of cat-related problems and the reduction of impact on native wildlife.

The C.A.T.S. Cats Assistance To Sterilise Inc Desex and Return to Home Method, which adheres to the Vacuum Effect, reduced cat numbers and cat related problems, and therefore reduced the impact on native wildlife, and proved to deliver tangible evidence of success within a very short

**time. C.A.T.S. Program also complies with the Natural Resources Amendment Act and has been used for the last 32 years with remarkable results.**

**This is in stark contrast to the failed State-Wide cat legislation which has failed to deliver any tangible evidence of success in reducing cat numbers or cat-related problems and therefore has shown no evidence of success in saving native wildlife. Indeed, it has resulted in a catastrophe, by doubling the numbers of cats in 5 years, due to the massive plummeting of requests for desexing, as most residents will not microchip and record on Dog and Cat Online (DACO) due to the fines and fees and restrictions, so they have stopped desexing as well.**

**This submission will give detailed evidence to substantiate these facts.**

#### **ABOUT C.A.T.S. Cats Assistance to Sterilise Inc.**

C.A.T.S. Inc is a PROactive organization who work at grass roots level to prevent cat issues from developing in the first instance, thus avoiding all the negative knee jerk and damaging REactive steps we find wherever we look at cat assisting programs and endeavors.

C.A.T.S. Inc is :

- The developer of a successful Cat Management System operating in Adelaide for over 32 years
- The Provider of Community Education in regard to the science of cats and wildlife
- The provider of a high volume cat desexing service through our co-operating vets with subsidized rates for all Adelaide residents who need help. Over a period of over 32 years, nearly 135, 000 male and female cats have been desexed.

As founder of C.A.T.S. Inc. I have a background in education, have represented the community at Council as an Elected Member, am a former member of the SA Government Cat Consultative Committee to the Dog and Cat Management Board and a former Public Relations Officer for Animal Liberation. This placed me in a good position to see the challenges involving human/animal interaction where animals cohabit with us in the urban environment. Whilst speaking and acting with respect and compassion for many wildlife, farm, domestic, entertainment and other animals, I saw a great need to care for the

cat population and realized it was impossible to care for the domestic pet cat without considering the unowned cats as their fates impact on each other.

The Values C.A.T.S. Inc. uphold are:

- ✓ Animal Equality
- ✓ Providing solutions that encompass compassion and kindness to ALL animals
- ✓ The Five Freedoms
- ✓ **Educating the community to make them part of the solution**
- ✓ Doing the best we can, and doing the morally right and kindest thing when there is no perfect solution.

The evolution of C.A.T.S. saw an organization that fell into place very quickly with results at the same pace.

A letter from the City of Unley to the then Minister of Environment and Land, the Hon Kym Mayes summarizes this well.

24.08.1993

Dear Kym,

The Unley Council first provided financial support to C.A.T.S. Inc. in 1990. At this time, reports regarding problems caused by wandering or straying cats and calls for action to promote responsible cat ownership, were common.

Since C.A.T.S. Inc has operated in Unley complaints have decreased, a result of the considerable activity of the organization's volunteers. The success of C.A.T.S. Inc. is based upon 2 procedures:

1. Desexing which reduces the number of cats and associated complaints etc. and
2. The return of cats to their home environment.

It is this return that provides ecological balance. The destruction of cats, only creates cat free territories which are readily re-occupied by active animals. The Policy of C.A.T.S. Inc. is totally opposed to the killing of cats.

Whilst some believe that a cat free suburbia is desirable, a stable cat population which is gradually reducing over time, and ultimately results in only wanted numbers, is considered the next best option.

Control is obtainable with C.A.T.S. Inc. and is achieving the desired result. Records and lack of complaints substantiate this fact. Clearly owners of

colonies are not prepared to surrender unwanted pets for slaughter but are willing to participate in desexing programmes.

Our Administration and community is supportive of the work and efforts of C.A.T.S. Inc.

Yours sincerely,  
Michael Keenan  
Mayor.

From the Mayor's Office in Norwood Payneham to then Member for Mitcham  
Colin Caudel

24.11.1994

I write to express my personal support for the work that C.A.T.S. (Cats Assistance to Sterilise) carries out within our council area.

Since the C.A.T.S. organization has been operating in our Council area the problem with stray and feral cats has been significantly reduced. The service which C.A.T.S. provides by financially aiding sterilization of cats and pick up of strays etc., is a necessary and successful way of controlling unwanted cats.

In recognition of the work done by C.A.T.S. one of their volunteers Anita Wayne received a special commendation from Council in the Australia Day Awards for her significant work in this area in both raising awareness of people to the desexing of cats and also in raising significant funds to help subsidize the project.

Yours faithfully,  
V Ciccarello.  
(Mayor)

From Eastern Regional Health Authority Inc. 2.03.1999 after C.A.T.S. assistance.

As you are aware, in the mid 1980's this Authority was often called upon to deal with large numbers of feral cats especially in the Burnside area.

We unfortunately had to arrange for the humane destruction of these cats by request of the residents.

However during the nineties, the demand for our services dropped dramatically and in the last few years no concerns about large cat numbers have been brought to our attention.

John Veldhoen  
Chief Executive Officer

## **THE CHALLENGES WE HAVE FOUND**

I have learned that there are many in the community, but not all, that value the life of the unowned cat as much as that of a pet - both are sentient creatures and capable of living in the same community with us.

At Council, a call is received with a complaint about a cat or several cats. There is caterwauling going on, sleep is lost, and the complainer is rightly thinking about his own welfare and that of his family, but usually ignoring the needs of the cat/s themselves. "CAN COUNCIL PLEASE DO SOMETHING?" Historically Council responds by sending out the Ranger, the cats are removed and the resident is happy. The cat/s go either to the pound or a shelter where they are assessed for suitability for re-homing. Usually, a frightened unowned cat or kitten will be deemed unsuitable for rehoming because of defensive behavior brought on simply by fear and most cats arriving in trapping cages do not leave alive. Euthanasia follows. The RSPCA shelters euthanize 3 or more cats to every 1 dog. An infiltrator cat/s moves into the vacated space, the caterwauling continues and nothing has been solved despite enormous financial effort.

At the Shelter a new cat is deposited by a kindly person who becomes broken hearted when they follow up to learn that their "rescue" was euthanized. The vet who plunged the needle hangs his head and a few weeks later realizes he/she cannot continue to suffer through this trauma of taking these innocent lives and shelter staff find it hard to go on. Mental trauma of shelter staff has been recognized in round table discussions done by the Animal Justice Party chaired by Emma Hurst MLC NSW. Despite this heartbreak, nothing was solved, despite the best intentions of the rescuer.

Council receives another call and this time there are bird feathers on a back lawn and a cat is blamed. In fact, rarely is any evidence given that a cat was seen and witnessed. "CAN COUNCIL PLEASE DO SOMETHING? WHY ARE THEY NOT PROTECTING OUR WILDLIFE??"

The Ranger is sent out.....the pointless circle is repeated.

Council staff will testify to the fact that they already have more on their hands than they can manage and are NOT cat managers.

All shelter staff will testify to the difficulty of finding suitable good homes in the numbers that would be needed to prevent euthanasia.

Despite the euthanasia, no cat numbers are reduced (see further on "What becomes Counter Intuitive and Why" PG 7) and no wildlife protection has occurred. In short an expensive time consuming and pointless and heartbreaking exercise was engaged in.

## **HOW THE C.A.T.S. Inc CAT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM WORKS BY CONTRAST**

**There is recognition that a perfect solution is not achievable and that the best solution must be sought.**

**Keeping the cat population ceiling low, allowing sufficient numbers of free-living cats to patrol their territories to prevent intruder cats, whilst keeping the mice and rat numbers down, has been proved to be the most effective solution.**

The C.A.T.S. system humanely breaks the cycle of endless cat destructions, works in with natural cat behavior and feline needs, reduces predation on wildlife, whilst being efficient and cost- effective, tangible evidence of success is clearly seen in a very short period of time, unlike the failed legislative approach.

1. **Helping Council** to reach out into the community to answer the calls for help, has been the first step.

Council's working in co-operation with the system refer their cat related calls to C.A.T.S. and we reach out to the distressed person and explain the reason for the caterwauling, feathers on the lawn (often a bird strike from a carnivorous bird since feathers are left in the open and cats hide their prey with feathers ( a practice known confirmed by the Adelaide Museum and known as caching) and have the whole conversation council simply does not have the time and resources for. Having turned around the animosity of the complainer, we enlist the person's co-operation in becoming part of the solution.

A plan is made, which will vary from case to case, but always the cat is taken to one of our co-operating vets (which now number to over 60) who desexes the cat at a discount rate.

Desexing will eliminate almost all the problems that give rise to complaints. They do not spray tom cat urine, caterwaul over mates all night long, travel long distances in search of mates and are less likely to leave their droppings in other properties. Also, the return of the cats to home, controls the mice and rats and deters snakes by removing the snakes preferred rodent food. Most importantly they will no longer have kittens that will then also breed on for generations.

The cat no longer demonstrates behavior that would normally land them in a shelter only to lose their life.

## **2. Helping Residents to help Unowned Cats**

All residents of SA who need help - whether they live within the boundaries of co-operating councils or not, are eligible for assistance from C.A.T.S. Inc. for low cost desexing, provided they attend the clinic of one of our co-operating vets. The need for this low cost service has become clearly apparent as cats are being brought from great distances to reach one of our co-operating vets. Some have booked in for a time when the owner/carer was visiting the city. Such is the love and compassion of many of our clients towards cats that we find that they save out of their pensions to be able to be of assistance to an unowned cat by desexing at a subsidized rate, which they then allow to continue to live in their gardens where they are fed and cared for. Our telephone staff hear the stories every day.

## **3. Helping Cat Owners**

You don't have to be on a pension or low income. Good income earners also struggle to find disposable income or make the money stretch far enough for a cat vet consultation and a desexing procedure which can be hundreds of dollars. Desexing is key to keeping ceiling numbers down and our organization has recognized this from early days. Therefore, we also help those in need who are NOT on a low income, so that they in turn can help their pets and assist with unowned cats.

## **4. We do NOT support the deliberate breeding of any cats.**

We do not assist with pedigree cats or those from a Breeder. We do not consider that these people are in need of assistance. Breeding cats does not assist us in

keeping cat numbers down. We would prefer a moratorium on cat breeding until such time as shelter numbers are brought under control. To this end, amendments to the Animal Welfare and Dog and Cat Management Bill being brought forward by Tammy Franks will be useful to get a more complete picture of the Euthanasia numbers from all shelters right across the state.

## **WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE THAT THE C.A.T.S. INC SYSTEM WORKS?**

The continued response from the public and our knowledge that shelter numbers can be reduced, plus knowing that we have prevented the birth of millions of kittens and saved the suffering of mother cats worn down by excessive litters of kittens, is what makes us continue the work.

The graph on the front cover of this Submission indicates that the number of cats taken in and destroyed by the Animal Welfare League dropped to almost half within the first 5 years of the commencement of C.A.T.S. Inc. mass desexing. The numbers on this graph were supplied by the Animal Welfare League who were taking in most of the cats at the time (about 3 to 4 times as many as the RSPCA)

### **WITHIN 5 YEARS, C.A.T.S. MASS DESEXING OF CATS, OWNED AND UNOWNED, VIRTUALLY HALVED THE NUMBERS OF CATS RECEIVED AND DESTROYED AT THE AWL**

Today the numbers of cats desexed by C.A.T.S. is nearly at 135,000. To give you a visualization of what this looks like imagine the Adelaide Oval. It has a seating capacity of 50,000. Imagine 2 and 2/3 Adelaide Ovals filled with cats. Approximately half of these have been former unowned cats.

From 5 months of age, each female can have 4 litters a year of up to 8 kittens. If half of these litter numbers are female, half could reproduce in another 5 months, making it 2 generations of mother and daughters that can reproduce inside of a year. We know we have prevented millions of kittens in ongoing generations from being born, and saved the suffering of unowned mother cats, worn down by excessive litters of kittens.

## **WHAT ARE THE THINGS THAT BECOME COUNTER PRODUCTIVE AND WHY**

The first thing to remember is that nearly all Legislative Acts towards making the lives of cats better are counter intuitive. Whatever legislation you may

**have been thinking about passing, it is that legislation which will become obstructive.**

“Legislation is obstructive?” “ Why?” I can hear you asking. Here is what the evidence shows.

Before cat bylaws South Australia had the highest rate of desexing for any capital in Australia (REARK Research Survey) and an excellent record of good cat management. Mass desexing was being achieved through the C.A.T.S. low priced desexing scheme.

On May 31, 2021, Dog and Cat Online (DACO) showed 66,596 listed cats. This is just approximately 16.5% of the RSPCA estimate of 400,000 owned cats, and this comes just 1 month short of 3 years after the 2018 change to State laws requiring all cats to be desexed, microchipped and recorded on Dog And Cat Online (DACO) Why so few listings? Why such little compliance within nearly 3 years? Especially in view of the fact that our figures show a great willingness of the public not only to desex their own cats but also unowned cats.

**Why suddenly in a single day post the new legislation did our telephone staff receive less than half of the normal rate of calls? The numbers fell so dramatically and so quickly that it left no doubt as to the reason, so let me shine the light on the problem.**

- **REGISTRATIONS AND MICROCHIPPING – counter intuitive Effect No 1**  
Registering and/or microchipping a cat is not the same thing as registering/microchipping a dog. If I was speaking to you face to face I would allow a moment for that to sink in as I am sure it is a completely new thought to you.

The reason this is so, is because of the **estimated** 200,000 number of cats in the urban area,( Paul Stevenson CEO RSPCA interviewed by Miles Kemp – Advertiser 12.12.2022) are free living unowned cats and whilst this is the RSPCA estimate, the number could be higher. To be really clear, these are not strays that have wandered away from home. These cats have never had an owner and have been born of many generations of unowned cats. This is why the term “rehomed” is not accurate. These cats have never had a domestic home and their territories are their home.

When there is a need for cats to be registered and microchipped what do you think it does to these unowned cats who are neither registered or microchipped? It makes them "Illegal" and subject to a Ranger round up and being destroyed. What do you think it does to people who have willingly put their hand up to assist unowned cats but do not want to take ownership of them? It criminalizes them for not microchipping these cats. But here's the important point. We have clients who have helped many unowned cats get desexed and thereby keep the ceiling population down, but now suddenly, they need to register and microchip them as well and take ownership. Well how many cats can one person own as a matter of practicality let alone legally? It also opens the door to be seen as a criminal for the number of cats they would need to OWN, if they wanted to continue assisting these unowned cats.

**The 2018 Legislation is what has brought the referral writing of our organization to half capacity.**

And we could be helping so many more cats. Over a 32 period we have managed to refer nearly 135,000 cats to be desexed preventing the birth of millions of kittens and many ongoing generations and now we are at half pace because the community is being forced to microchip and register, which they simply won't do and so they are not desexing either to avoid fines for deviating from the new law. We need to get the mass desexing numbers back up and unless microchipping is changed to a matter of choice instead of mandatory, there will be no mass desexing particularly of unowned cats, so there will never be any reduction in cat numbers or cat related problems.

Quoting from Paul Stevenson again in the same article shows that cat numbers in shelters have gone up 50% in 5 years. Yes that coincides with the new State law coming into effect in July 2018, after being announced a little earlier. This is an increase **not** a decrease, just as the science known to us led us to believe would be the case.

The reasons that often come to mind supporting mandatory microchipping are for a safe return to home for the cat, but don't forget the reason they are in the shelter is because they have no human owner so that reasoning is not valid. Loved owned cats that are well treated rarely stray from the food bowl. If a ranger has picked them up in between meal times, it needs to be noted that a Ranger should not be doing so. This is where we need to

remember that a cat is not a dog and should not be treated the same way. A dog can, and sometimes does, present a danger to a member of the public and even a well-trained dog can be triggered. Therefore it is quite right that a ranger removes a wandering dog. A healthy cat however, who poses no danger to the public, and who is minding their own business should simply be left alone unless it is in need of medical attention. Cats have been free living long before some of them were invited into our houses and wherever they are found – that is their territory – their home.

A further misnomer about “a safe return to home” is that a microchip will deter a cat hater. The practice of cat haters is to trap and kill or ~~and~~ dump these cats in the Adelaide Hills. We have been told by callers that they are going to get traps and dump some cats in Belair. These cats then try and find their way home and arrive back in their home territories only with skin and bones left, or else they just die along the way. Their food source has changed from their own territory, so they need to become resourceful and this makes it a greater problem for wildlife.

**This is due to the current legislation which, not only allows, but encourages the use of these cruel diabolical cat trapping cages, which the RSPCA has stated should not be supplied to the public as they have seen 'horrendous conditions' forced upon animals. Allowing these weapons of torture is environmental vandalism as this is the most efficient way of releasing live cats into the bush to kill native fauna in their desperate struggle for survival. These cages should never be sanctioned by government and need to be banned.**

#### **CONTAINMENT AND CURFEWS Counter Intuitive Effect No 2**

Firstly this indoor living is not healthy for the cat, with vets reporting that cats are showing signs of obesity, hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis and anxiety and stress.

Keeping a cat contained, is removing it from its territory and the garden is left undefended from infiltrating cats as there is no such thing as a cat free zone in an open system, unless there is something that can keep the cats out 24/7. Cats are not dogs – they can scale fences. The territory still supports life and so others of the same species that need it, find it and take up residence. This is what is called “The Vacuum Effect” and it is the reason that there will be no reduced calls of complaint to the Council. Studies have shown that an increase

can often be expected as younger more virile cats move in and the numbers breed up.

\*Removal can = additional\*

This constant removal and influx of new cats destabilises the ecosystem and this is a danger to native animals. We need to keep the ecosystem stable and the best way to do this is to desex as many cats as we can and leave them in their territories whilst fed, managed and cared for through community co-operation.

As this is such a critical point, I have copied in some of the scientific data below taken from Ireland's Cat Care Manual on the subject of the Vacuum Effect.

## The Vacuum Effect

### Quick Facts

- If cats are removed from their outdoor home, it creates a territorial opening - or vacuum - that will not remain empty.
- Removing cats from an area may cause a temporary decrease in the cat population, but more cats WILL take their place - and it won't take long.
- This phenomenon is known in conservation studies as the Vacuum Effect. The Vacuum Effect has been observed in many species, not just cats.
- Catching and removing (or killing) cats is therefore futile. It is an expensive, deadly cycle which yields no long-term benefits.

You may have heard the expression "nature abhors a vacuum". It refers to the phenomenon that when a space is emptied, nature will fill it. Once you understand this reality, you'll know why killing cats (or otherwise removing them) from a given location is doomed to fail. The idea that removing cats will not lead to a decrease in cat populations across time may feel counter-intuitive, but it is grounded in a well-documented concept in biology known as the **Vacuum Effect**.

Understanding the Vacuum Effect is vital to save lives. Animal control agencies, animal rescues, pounds and local and national government must account for the Vacuum Effect in their laws and policies in order to govern effectively and create the best outcomes for every cat and kitten. For cats who live outdoors, it is a literal matter of life and death.

So, what is the Vacuum Effect? Let's start with the basics.

### What is the Vacuum Effect and What Does It Have To Do with Cats?

The Vacuum Effect occurs when a portion of an animal population is permanently removed from their home range. These animals may have been killed or removed by people, a natural disaster, or any other means. The result is a temporary dip in population levels.

To be clear, any such population dip will only be temporary. The initial population lived in that location because there were resources such as shelter, food and water. Once emptied, this still resource-rich habitat - the vacuum - inevitably attracts other members of the same species from neighbouring areas. They move in to use the same resources that sustained the first group.

Both the new individuals and any remaining members of the original population then reproduce. What's more, they reproduce at higher rates to fill the habitat and take advantage of the available resources.

Before long, the area fills back up to capacity again, as if the animals were never removed at all. The Vacuum Effect occurs across many species, including foxes, mice, voles and badgers. Of course, it also occurs for cats.

### **The Vacuum Effect Makes or Breaks Public Policy for Cats**

Worldwide, vast amounts of money are spent each year rounding up and killing cats through "catch and kill" schemes. The unfounded hope is that the killing will lead to reduced cat population levels.

The Vacuum Effect ensures it will not.

Scientific evidence proves that lethal cat population control schemes don't work. A large body of research confirms what smart observers have long known: new cats will inevitably fill habitats emptied by cat removal schemes. In other words, the Vacuum Effect occurs, and it makes killing outdoor cats pointless.

Not only does the cat population rebound, it rebounds fast. Before you know it, there are the same number of cats outdoors as there were before. The only result is that many cats are needlessly killed ... often over and over again.

What's worse, lethal cat control schemes are as indiscriminate as they are cruel and ineffective. Countless cats, whether unowned or pet cats, are killed in the process. That is part of the reason rounding up and killing cats is massively unpopular with the public. Not only is it morally unsound, catch and kill can also put the animal control organisations at legal risk.

All of this for an inherently flawed policy that provides no long-term cat population control.

### **We Need to Change the Status Quo for Animal Control and Animal Rescues**

For much of the past 100 years, animal control agencies and local governments have attempted to take an "easy route" to reduce or eliminate cat populations through catch and kill schemes.

Yet as you've learned above, there is no way to make these lethal schemes work. The Vacuum Effect will always ensure a new group of cats will move into the emptied environment to take advantage of resources.

Even the strictest feeding bans on cats won't change anything. It is impossible to rid an area of food sources, especially for cats, who are naturally gifted scavengers. Just think of the abundant supply of insects and rodents in most outdoor spaces, plus food waste in and around dumpsters. It quickly becomes apparent how plentiful food is for cats in our towns and cities. (Mahlow)

According to one scientific journal article, "...the presence of feral cats in a place indicates an ecological niche for approximately that number of cats." (Zaubrecher) Each time cats are removed, the population will rebound to fill that niche.

All of these facts point to one simple conclusion: we have to change the status quo for animal control and animal shelters. Catch and kill does not and has never worked, and it only serves to take lives and drain taxpayer dollars.

Animal control agencies and local governments need to shift their thinking and their approaches to cats outdoors in ways that are based in science, fact, and experience.

### **Research Citations**

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I have never seen a single piece of valid evidence in all my research that confinement of cats saves native wildlife, as new cats simply fill the vacuum and authorities do not have a hope of catching them fast enough to reduce the numbers as the cats breed more kittens than can be trapped and taken to shelters or killed.

### **WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN GETTING IT RIGHT?**

A change of focus. Until now many councils have tried to silence the noise of the complainer on the phone, by any means, usually at a cost to the cat and with no satisfactory solution.

Redirecting this energy to educating the complainer and making them part of the solution is the answer and the way forward. C.A.T.S. has been doing this for over 32 years and it works.

Cat legislation is costly for residents and is counterproductive. Indeed, the Queensland Government has repealed it's cat management requirements from its *Animal Management (Dogs and Cats) Act 1998* citing them as ineffective and costly for local government.

RSPCA South Australia chief executive Paul Stevenson states (Advertiser July 24 2020) "Uncontrolled reproduction is the root cause of cat overpopulation in South Australia."

**Desexing is the single most important aspect of any cat management plan, but this cat desexing needs to be voluntary.**

**Mandatory desexing has proved to have backfired with desexing not increased, as was already predicted in many submissions, including one from the Australian Veterinary Association, formerly sent to the public consultation, in 1994.**

To reiterate: Desexing solves almost all the problems that give rise to complaints.

Desexing female cats...

- Prevents unwanted kitten births
- Stops female cats from coming into season and attracting many undesexed male cats
- Improves quality of life and stops female cats from becoming weakened by continually having babies
- Stops cats from wandering in search of mates.

Desexing male cats...

- Stops cats from spraying strong smelling tom cat urine
- Stops cats from fighting over mates which leads to loud caterwauling all night
- Stops the injuries from fighting over mates
- Stops cats from wandering in search of mates and reduces cats being killed while crossing roads.

Although only new generation cats born from 1 July 2018 are required to be desexed at age of 6 months, C.A.T.S. Inc encourages the desexing of all cats and C.A.T.S. advises that females can be desexed at 5 months as they can get pregnant and males at about 6 months. We do not promote early age desexing of younger kittens which are already in their homes.

### **HOME GROWN SUCCESS**

Most of the C.A.T.S. Inc Committee have spent a lifetime working with cats as well as constantly researching the best methods of cat control from around the world. It quickly achieved success within the first 6 years as shown earlier.

### **A Real Life Example of Success from SA Council Norwood, Payneham, St Peters**

In the 1980s the Adelaide cat-problem was enormous with cats breeding out of control and problems being so wide-spread that one Council beginning as Kensington and Norwood and later amalgamating as Norwood Payneham and St Peters decided to do something about it. Later in 2015 Council's Animal Management Plan states that "the Council does not experience a significant problem with cats" It could be seen that C.A.T.S. does have proof of success.

At the beginning Mayor Jack Richards stated that at the time the Kensington and Norwood Council were at a loss as to what to do with the massive cat problem and asked if C.A.T.S. Inc would be willing to take on the job of cat management of the City. He offered that the Council would on pay \$1,000 per annum to help us.

When Kensington and Norwood amalgamated with Payneham and St Peters former Mayor Vini Ciccarello encouraged Council to expand the \$1,000 per annum to \$3,000 per annum for the three Councils' share. We greatly appreciated this.

Since C.A.T.S. Cats Assistance To Sterilise was asked by the Kensington and Norwood Council, over 30 years ago, to take over Council's cat management, C.A.T.S. has been responsible for a contribution of hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Norwood Payneham and St Peters community by –

1. Building up goodwill and a good working relationship with cooperating veterinary surgeons to provide desexing for our referrals at about half or even a third of regular desexing rates for the same service as for cats where the full price is paid. This means that nearly all our residents, who need assistance, can afford to desex their cats at this low rate. Where there is no one that can afford to pay for desexing the cats that they are looking after, such as in factory sites or industrial yards, where cats are controlling the mice and rats, C.A.T.S. can pay for the desexing from the Council grant.

2. Providing the Administration staff, facilities and equipment necessary to facilitate the desexing referrals, the negotiation and mediation between residents who have cat-related problems and those who have the cats, reports, paperwork and distribution of leaflets on responsible cat management as well as advice on correct cat care.

3. Being able to obtain advice and information as well as assistance from professional people including scientists, who are happy to donate their services to C.A.T.S. as they know it is for a well-respected organisation.

4. We have built up an excellent relationship with the community and are noted for the diplomatic and amicable way that we solve cat-related problems without causing bad publicity and feuds between neighbours

5. Most of the C.A.T.S. Committee have spent a lifetime working with cats as well as constantly researching the best methods of cat control from around the world.

Just to give a few examples of what our dedicated supporters do, one volunteer has personally caught, desexed, returned and managed nearly 200 cats in the Glynde area, another, who used to work in Mitcham but as we no longer work with Mitcham Council, since it's contentious cat bylaw alienated residents, travelled over to Norwood and organised the desexing of many cats along The Parade and another resident assisted with getting cats in the side streets off The Parade desexed as well. Two other members organised stray cats in the Kent Town area, and this resulted in a very successful outcome.

Numerous cats have been desexed in St Peters and one big colony has been brought completely under control. Plus, of course, all the cats that have been desexed in Kensington where you hardly ever see an undesexed cat or a kitten unless it is with a newly arrived resident.

**This C.A.T.S./Council partnership has been so successful in reducing cat numbers and cat-related problems that the Council stated that complaints were so low that there was no need for cat confinement.**

**The Norwood Payneham and St Peters Council has now progressed to FREE cat desexing for both owned and unowned cats, across the entire City.**

## **IN SUMMARY**

We believe that we have demonstrated here that the DRH (Desex and Return to Home) system meets with community expectations when the community is fully informed and educated about all the facts, and that decent minded people will in fact contribute to the success of the scheme when an opportunity presents itself.

**This efficient, cost effective, humane and successful, program is offered as a template for your efforts in reducing cat numbers and cat related problems, reducing impact on native wildlife as well as making the lives of cats, their owners and supporters better, as expected by the already engaged community.**

C.A.T.S. Secretary recently authored and published a booklet called "from the Cat's Eye View", to illustrate the fact that no cat management plan will be successful if it is not based on the "The Vacuum Effect". This publication was sent to Dr Susan Close and I would like you to all have an opportunity to read it. Please let me know if you would like me to send you a copy.

Yours faithfully

Christine Pierson

President

email [animalsassistant@outlook.com](mailto:animalsassistant@outlook.com)

C.A.T.S. Cats Assistance To Sterilise Inc

Cat Behaviourist and Cat Consultant

Former Councillor Norwood Payneham and St Peters Council

Former member State Government Cat Consultative Committee to the Dog  
and Cat Management Board

Former TAFE instructor in Cat Management to Council staff and the public

Former teacher Dip KTC

Recipient of State Government Award for C.A.T.S. for "Service to Councils"



COPY

ELECTORATE OFFICE

242 THE PARADE  
NORWOOD SA 5067

Date:

Hon Susan Lenehan MP  
Minister for Environment & Planning  
Ground Floor Northern Wing  
Treasury Building  
144 King William Street  
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Dear Minister,

I write on behalf of Cats Assistance to Sterilise Inc. (CATS) who have applied to your Department for a grant.

CATS is performing valuable environmental and social work in the Kensington and Norwood area. There has been a marked improvement in the number of cats around the district. I have had less concerns brought to my attention this year. I believe this to be a result of the work of CATS.

All the work of CATS is performed by volunteers at some personal expense. The volunteers invest a large amount of time in the organisation.

I have been impressed by CATS efforts not only in the desexing area but in achieving publicity and fundraising. CATS are effectively spreading the work about responsible pet ownership.

This year CATS have applied to private sponsor for funding to publish a book for school children about the responsibilities of owning pets. I believe that CATS are providing a long term solution to the problems which currently exist.

I strongly support their application for funding.

Yours faithfully,

Greg Crafter  
MEMBER FOR NORWOOD

IN REPLY QUOTE REF: 119/3 (14484)  
REFER ENQUIRIES TO: M.Nolan  
DIRECT TELEPHONE: 366 4539



THE CORPORATION  
OF THE CITY OF  
**KENSINGTON  
NORWOOD**

175 THE PARADE NORWOOD  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA 5067  
P.O. BOX 204,  
NORWOOD, S.A. 5067  
TELEPHONE: (08) 366 4555  
FACSIMILE: (08) 332 6338

Mr Kym Mayes  
Minister for Environment and Planning and  
Minister for Animal Welfare  
Parliament House  
ADELAIDE 5000

25 August 1993

Dear Mr Mayes,

Re: Cat Control

I am writing to you in support of the organisation known as C.A.T.S. (Cats Assistance to Sterilise Inc). This Council has been associated with and given support to C.A.T.S. over the past 4 to 5 years and we are extremely pleased with the humane, cost-effective and positive methods in which they approach the problem of cat control.

I believe that at least 2 of our neighbouring Councils, the City of Burnside and the City of Unley, have also had positive dealings with C.A.T.S. and further, that the Town of St. Peters have begun working with the C.A.T.S. Scheme to control a colony of problem cats in their area.

This City has been so impressed with the work done by C.A.T.S and its supporters that it awarded their Fundraising Coordinator an Award on Australia Day for outstanding voluntary service to the district in the area of cat control.

It was recently stated in "The Advertiser" that you would like to meet with the Australian Veterinary Association and the Local Government Association to discuss a state wide cat-management program. As a member of the Local Government Association, we request that you also speak to the C.A.T.S. Organisation and consider their approach, views and ideas to the problem of cat control. As stated above, this Council is extremely pleased with the results achieved to date within our area. C.A.T.S. Inc can be contacted by telephoning Christine Pierson, President on 331 0476 or by writing to P.O. Box 160 Kensington 5068.

We reiterate that the methods adopted by C.A.T.S. are humane, cost-effective and positive - all issues that must be taken into account when considering this matter.

If you wish to discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to contact David Green at our office, phone 366 4555.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Green', written over a horizontal line.

# EASTERN METROPOLITAN REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY INC.

POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. Box 480, Magill, S.A. 5072  
OFFICES: 558 Magill Road, Magill, S.A. 5072

(08) 33 278 33  
Fax (08) 33 292 08

## COMPRISING LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS

City of Burnside	City of Kensington & Norwood
City of Campbelltown	City of Payneham
District of East Torrens	Town of St. Peters

JWAV/HZ

19th June, 1991

Ms J Farrelly  
Animal Welfare Dept  
New Zealand Insurance Building  
55 King William Street  
ADELAIDE S A 5000

Dear Ms Farrelly,

Re: C A T S Inc - Cat Assistance to sterilise

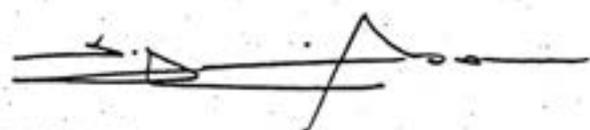
This Authority on behalf of several of its constituent Councils, most specifically the City of Burnside, has had occasions to use the services of the above organisation.

Several years ago we were involved with extermination of a large group of feral cats in the Glenunga area. This caused a very adverse reaction from various persons and groups resulting in public demonstrations and "unfavourable publicity" for the City of Burnside.

Since then we have supported the C A T S organisation and their activities including some financial support. They have successfully resolved a number of cat related problems for us.

In conclusion officers support the submission from the organisation for State Government financial assistance so that they can continue to put in place a long term solution for reduced numbers of unwanted cats in urban and country areas.

Yours faithfully,



N J Wilson  
DIRECTOR/REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES

This was in C.A.T.S.  
early days when we  
commenced working  
with EMRHA Inc.  
See the following  
statement proving  
our remarkable  
results and success.



# EASTERN METROPOLITAN REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY INC

POSTAL ADDRESS: P O Box 275, Stepney S A 5069  
OFFICES: 101 Payneham Road, St Peters S A 5069

Phone: (08) 8362 7655  
Fax: (08) 8362 7455  
E-mail: emrha@emrha.sa.gov.au

## COMPRISING LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS

City of Burnside

City of Campbelltown

City of Norwood, Payneham & St Peters

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE PROVIDER for

Corporation of Walkerville

JV/MW

2 March 1999

Ms C Pearson  
CATS Inc  
P O Box 160  
KENSINGTON PARK S A 5068

Dear Christine,

**RE: EMRHA'S INVOLVEMENT WITH FERAL CATS**

---

As you are aware in the mid nineteen eighties this Authority was often called upon to deal with large numbers of feral cats especially in the Burnside area.

We unfortunately had to arrange for the humane destruction of these cats by request of the residents.

However, during the nineties the demand for our services dropped dramatically and in the last few years no concerns about large numbers of cats have been brought to our attention.

I hope this is of assistance to you in your speech. Good luck at the conference.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN VELDHOEN  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



# City of Unley

Civic Centre, 181 Unley Road, Unley, S.A.  
Telephone: (08) 372 5111 Facsimile: (08) 271 4886

Your Reference:

Our Reference: 01/00319

24th August 1993

The Hon Kym Mayes MP  
Minister of Environment and Land  
Management  
G P O Box 667  
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Dear Kym,

The Unley Council first provided financial support to C.A.T.S. Inc. in 1990. At the time reports regarding problems caused by wandering or straying cats and calls for action to promote responsible cat ownership, were common. Uncontrolled breeding in colonies saw cat numbers rapidly increasing.

Since C.A.T.S. Inc. has operated in Unley complaints have decreased, a result of the considerable activity by the organisation's volunteers. The success of C.A.T.S. Inc. is based upon two procedures:

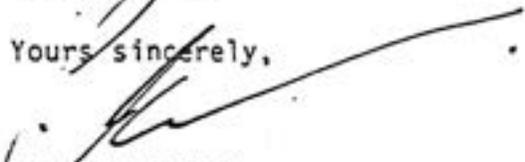
- 1) desexing which reduces numbers of cats and associated complaints etc.; and
- 2) the return of cats to their home environment.

It is this return that provides ecological balance. The destruction of cats only creates cat-free territories which are readily re-occupied by active animals. The policy of C.A.T.S. Inc. is totally opposed to the killing of cats.

While some believe a cat-free suburbia is desirable, a stable cat population which is gradually reducing over time and which ultimately results in only wanted numbers is considered the next best option. Control is attainable with C.A.T.S. Inc. and is achieving the desired result. Records and lack of complaints substantiate this fact. Clearly owners of colonies are not prepared to surrender unwanted pets for slaughter but are willing to participate in desexing programmes.

Our Administration and community is supportive of the work and efforts of C.A.T.S. Inc.

Yours sincerely,

  
MICHAEL KEENAN  
MAYOR.

ENQUIRY: PETER PERILLI  
REFERENCE: 8366 4523  
PHONE: 8366 4533



City of  
Norwood  
Payneham  
& St Peters

23 March 2004

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

I advise that the City of Norwood, Payneham and St Peters has worked with CATS (Cats Assistance to Sterilise) Incorporated for a period of nearly sixteen years in order to assist with the number of un-desexed cats throughout the city.

In 1988, the Council resolved to donate \$3,000 per annum to CATS Incorporated in order to assist them with their cause to deal with their excessive numbers in a sensitive and effective way.

Since that time, the Council has continued to fund this association with \$3,000 per annum as it has held the view that controls on cats have to be sensitive to the Community's needs and therefore the Council believes that in most ways this has been achieved by CATS Incorporated. CATS Incorporated has been significant in reducing cat numbers and cat related problems in an efficient and humane way by coordinating existing services and getting as many cats desexed and returned to the home territory as possible. The more desexed resident cats, the fewer un-desexed cats can move in and by adopting this approach, there has been a major success in the reduction of the number of cats within our Council area.

I also wish to comment on Christine Pearson and the volunteers that work for CATS Incorporated. They have gone about their task in a professional and sensitive manner and have been one of the major reasons for reducing the number of cat related problems within the city.

CATS is a not-for-profit organisation and its primary cause is to promote the welfare of cats. This is demonstrated by the fact that any proceeds received are reinvested into furthering its cause. They believe that their method of operation is an effective way of reducing cat numbers. They believe that their program clearly shows that the removal of cats from an area provides only a temporary solution and that a managed approach involving desexing and return provides a better outcome for all in limiting cat numbers.

Christine Pierson and her volunteers continue to be well supported by the residents of the City of Norwood, Payneham and St Peters. I also conclude that the Council continues to contribute each year to CATS Incorporated to help it maintain and promote the program within the city, and considers that this amount which is contributed to CATS Incorporated is spent for the better of the community.

Yours faithfully

**Peter Perilli**  
General Manager Urban Services

175 The Parade  
Norwood 5067  
South Australia  
PO Box 204  
Kent Town 5071

Tel 08 8366 4555  
Fax 08 8332 6338

email  
townhall@ncsp.sa.gov.au



THE CORPORATION  
OF THE CITY OF  
**KENSINGTON  
NORWOOD**

MAYOR'S OFFICE

175 THE PARADE NORWOOD  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA 5087  
P.O. BOX 204,  
KENT TOWN, S.A. 5071  
TELEPHONE: (08) 366 4544  
FACSIMILE: (08) 282 8338

Mr Colin Caudell  
Member for Mitcham  
Westfield Shoppingtown  
Diagonal Road  
OAKLANDS PARK SA 5046

24 November 1994

Dear Mr Caudell,

**RE: CATS ORGANISATION**

*I write to express my personal support for the work that C.A.T.S. (Cats Assistance to Sterilise Incorporated) carries out within our Council area.*

*Since the C.A.T.S. organisation has been operating within our Council area the problem with stray and feral cats has been significantly reduced. The service which C.A.T.S. provides, by financially aiding sterilization of cats and pick-up of strays etc., is a necessary and successful way of controlling unwanted cats.*

*In recognition for the work done by C.A.T.S. one of their volunteers, Anita Wayne received a special commendation from Council in the Australia Day Awards for her significant work in this area in both raising awareness of people to the desexing of cats and also in raising significant funds to help subsidise the project.*

Yours faithfully

V CICCARELLO

*The Cat Protection Society  
of South Australia (Inc.)  
P O Box 276 Woodville SA 5011*



All Elected Members  
City of Mitcham  
131 Belair Road  
TORRENS PARK SA 5062

Dear Elected Member

**RE: PROPOSED CAT BYLAW**

Our society urges Council to carefully consider its proposed bylaw to control cats.

Such controls have proved to be largely ineffective and expensive in New South Wales, Victoria and overseas. Education of residents and voluntary cat desexing have proved to be the most effective methods of controlling cat numbers and any associated problems which they may cause.

Many councils are working with C.A.T.S. Cats Assistance To Sterilise (Inc) to reduce cat problems. These include Burnside, Norwood Payneham and St Peters, Port Adelaide/Enfield, Salisbury and Unley.

As a testimony to this work, Mr Bruce Lang, the Chief Environmental Health Officer for The City of Unley has provided a statement. A copy of his statement is enclosed for your information.

We are convinced that the C.A.T.S. Inc Non-Legislative methods of cat control achieve far greater success in reducing cat numbers and cat related problems than the Legislative approach and for this reason we are pleased to make the following offer.

Should your council decide not to proceed with the introduction of a cat bylaw at this time, our society is prepared to offer funds, on a dollar for dollar basis, any donation made to C.A.T.S. Inc by Mitcham Council to desex cats in your Council area over the next 12 months..

We hope that Council will be in a position to accept our offer.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kate Clayton".

Kate Clayton  
President  
29th May 2009



The WORLD LEAGUE for PROTECTION of ANIMALS, Inc.  
P.O. Box 211, Gladstoneville, N.S.W. 2111, Australia. Tel: (02) 9817 4892 Fax: (02) 9817 4509  
Email: admin@wlp.org Web Address: www.wlp.org

To Whom it May Concern

Re: Proposed regulations to introduce companion Animal Microchipping and Registration in South Australia.

Our organisation has been active in hands on companion animal welfare work in NSW over several decades. We submit the following points and ask that they are taken into account in your consideration of the possible introduction of regulations regarding microchipping and registration of companion animals in South Australia in particular relating to cats.

- That the administration by local Councils of any such scheme is very costly and time consuming and results in the reduction of funds which ought to be and may very well be available for other more effective companion animal schemes such as community education on responsible companion animal care and support for or provision of low cost desexing.
- Responsible companion animal owners manage their animals responsibly but irresponsible ones ignore regulations and do not comply with requirements to microchip and register.
- Compliance is low both in NSW and Victoria, and is impossible to monitor or to police.
- Regulations were introduced in NSW ostensibly to facilitate the return of lost cats to their owners. However, as far as we have been able to ascertain very few microchipped cats stray to the extent that they become lost and need to be picked up by Rangers and returned to their owners. Therefore these regulations are irrelevant in that aspect.
- Microchipping and registration of cats has not had the effect of reducing cat populations in NSW. The main component of cat management, whether owned or free living, is revenue assisted desexing, ongoing community education and mediation should conflict occur in the community.
- Restrictions by Councils limiting 2 cats per household results in people hiding additional cats and not microchipping or registering them. These cats are not taken to the Vet to be desexed for fear of being caught. This leads to an explosion of kitten breeding.
- We commend the work carried out by C.A.T.S. Inc. (Cats Assistance To Sterilise) and wish that such excellent and effective services were available in other States.
- In view of the fact that South Australia is fortunate in having the above mentioned dedicated and effective group leading the way in cat population management, we recommend that such schemes be expanded and supported.

Halina Thompson President - World League for Protection of Animals

*Halina Thompson*

Registered under the Charitable Fundraising Act CFN 12896