

Parliament House

Adelaide SA 5000

29.01.2019



To Whom It May Concern

Regarding the new cat legislation which was introduced on 1 July 2018 and requesting its review

I have been the Vice President of C.A.T.S. Cats Assistance To Sterilise Inc since its incorporation in 1989 which is almost thirty years. This has given me considerable expertise in understanding both people and cats and how best to work with them in the community, to achieve the highest rate of desexing of cats to control breeding. I have also been working to encourage people to be responsible regarding their management of cats.

In addition, I have been writing the desexing referrals and sending them to our 60 plus cooperating Veterinary Surgeons for over 20 years.

The methods that C.A.T.S. uses have been tried and tested for 30 years, and this has been built on the research from around the world and interstate, regarding best practice in Cat Management. Indeed South Australia has become a leader in good cat management and was, before 1 July 2018, the state with the highest rate of desexed cats and the best record for cat management. (See Reark Research Survey which found that Adelaide had the highest rate of desexed cats in the county)

Even in our early days, C.A.T.S. received a State Government Award for our services to councils and we were supported by the politicians and ministers of those times.

We have been very disappointed by the way that, more recently, the former Labor Minister for Environment, Ian Hunter, excluded us from input into the changes to the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 and we have noted the

huge decrease in responsible cat management and particularly desexing, since the new legislation was imposed on 1 July 2018.

I can directly attest to the fact that calls requesting desexing referrals during my shifts have dropped to well below half than was the case before the new cat laws started. Sometimes I am now only getting 3 or 4 calls per 3 hour shift, instead of being flat out trying to get the referrals written before the next caller is on the line.

I find this both disappointing and unacceptable and I am therefore asking the Legislative Review Committee to take this seriously important issue and review it. The exclusion of C.A.T.S. and many other organisations and individuals that opposed making desexing and microchipping mandatory is in my view unacceptable.

Given the disaster that has resulted with already triple the number of kittens being born, apart from the massive drop in requests for desexing, should be enough evidence to consider changing the Regulations and repeal making desexing and microchipping mandatory.

There is no need to force people to microchip cats unless they are selling their cats, this should be a matter of choice. Without human intervention, cats rarely get lost in any case.

In addition, most cat owners were already desexing their cats. I substantiate this claim by quoting from the statements made by the Australian Veterinary Association which also opposes mandatory desexing.

The following is a quote from the Australian Veterinary Association

“Our policy on desexing points out that mandatory desexing of animals has not proven an effective strategy for reducing the number of unwanted companion animals. Mandatory desexing of owned animals also doesn’t account for the impact of semi-owned, stray and feral animals in pet overpopulation”.

There is a high level of voluntary compliance with desexing in owned animals – 93% for owned cats and 78% for owned dogs. Voluntary desexing has effectively managed population growth for owned animals in Australia. Existing research has shown that euthanasia in

pounds and shelters is rarely because an owner has too many animals’.

“Unfortunately, many of the opinions and policy ‘solutions’ to the problem are poorly informed about both the problems, and the strategies that have been effective against them in the past. This means that taxpayers’ money is invested by local and state governments in initiatives that will not have a significant impact on the problem they are intended to solve. Responsible pet owners are often required to spend more money on their pets due to increased regulation. And dogs and cats continue to be euthanised, eliciting the outrage of animal organisations who call for solutions that may not be based on scientific evidence or been proven to work”.

Indeed, the REARK research survey found that Adelaide had an even higher rate for desexed cats.

Instead of the new cat legislation decreasing the numbers of cats and kittens, it has resulted in just the opposite, with now triple the number of kittens being born. Even the RSPCA, which only receives a small percentage of the kittens and cats, has stated that they have nearly double the number that they had at this time last year, which I read in “The Advertiser”. I have also read letters in “The Advertiser” and been informed of more letters in the local papers, from other organisations and individuals, stating that the new cat legislation is a disaster.

I respectfully ask that you review this ineffective and counterproductive cat legislation. Thanking you for this opportunity to submit my request and please let me know if you would like further details.

Yours faithfully

Barbara Mott

Vice President C.A.T.S. Cats Assistance to Sterilise Incorporated