

Draft Cat Management Strategy for Flinders Council July 2013

Cat Management Legislation In Tasmania

Tasmania now has cat management legislation (*Cat Management Act 2009*) to encourage responsible pet ownership and attempt to address the feral cat problem in the State.

As of July 1 2012, a range of new measures has been introduced which have provided land owners in rural areas with formal rights and responsibilities with regard to cats on their land.

However, there are aspects of the legislation that will impact on cat owners in urban areas as well as those outside towns and cities.

Flinders Council is committed to supporting responsible domestic cat ownership and efforts to minimise the feral cat population on our islands.

Cats In Rural Areas

Under the new laws, primary producers, and people working on their behalf, may trap, seize or humanely destroy any cat found on rural land where livestock is grazed. On other private land that is more than one kilometre from a place of residence, a land manager or a person with the land manager's permission, can trap, seize or humanely destroy a cat.

Cats found on any private land, including rural and remote areas, may be returned to their owners if they have the appropriate domestic cat identification collar. There are also areas that are definite no-go zones for cats and have been defined as 'prohibited areas'.

Prohibited areas for cats include:

- All reserved lands under the Nature Conservation Act 2002, including national parks and conservation areas, as well as land subject to conservation covenants;
- Public reserves under the Crown Lands Act 1976; and
- Private timber reserves, forest reserves and state forest under the Forestry Act 1920.

Trapping and other control measures may be undertaken by the land

managers of these prohibited areas. Private individuals should be aware that any control measures undertaken in prohibited areas requires the formal approval of the land manager and any action without approval could lead to penalties being imposed.

Council recognizes that Feral Cats pose a significant threat to the environment and supports community based actions that minimize their numbers through humane trapping and control measures. Specific funding support for control programs will be sought when available through the State or Federal Governments and Council NRM staff are always available to discuss and support best practice approaches to community based control programs.

The Tasmanian State Government is currently preparing a Feral Cat Management Strategy. Once delivered, Council will seek to align specific on ground programs and actions, for which funding is available, with those actions outlined in the State strategy that have Council support.

Council recognises that control of feral cats can be achieved through community based efforts combined with targeted on ground programs and is committed to supporting the work of those in the community that are active in the control of feral cats.

Cats In All Areas

The legislation means that cats now have a legal status in Tasmanian society and so we can begin implementing measures which will help manage the cats in our communities. This is vitally important as, although the main impetus of the Act at this stage is to control feral populations in rural areas, these populations are often topped up by cats bred in urban areas. Flinders Council strongly urges all domestic cat owners to undertake the following actions to support this strategy:

Flinders Council encourages Responsible Cat Ownership

Responsible Cat Ownership includes:

1. A domestic cat is permanently identified so it can be distinguished as a domestic cat. Council on application can provide specific domestic cat collars which when used ensure your cat can be identified as a domestic cat. *Council strongly recommends all domestic cats wear identifying collars.*

2. A domestic cat is to be desexed, unless the cat is owned by a Registered Cat Breeder.
3. Only registered breeders are allowed to breed cats. Any cat or kitten that is offered for sale or is given away by a registered cat breeder under the new laws must be a minimum of eight weeks of age, desexed and microchipped or come with an agreement to have this done.
4. There is nothing specifically within the Act that prohibits cats entering urban property, so it is not an offence for cats to wander into a neighbouring yard. If you are having an issue with a local cat, speak to the owner and advise them of the problem, that way they can take steps to address it. If this doesn't work come and talk to Council about the problem or ring the Invasive Species Branch of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, water and the Environment (DPIPWE) and ask for their advice.