

KEEPING AND WELFARE OF CATS LOCAL LAW

The Shire of Capel has recently introduced a Local Law for the Keeping and Welfare of Cats. The law has been prepared to bring the control of domestic cats in line with that of dogs and to enable the control of stray and feral cats within the Shire.

WHY A LAW?

Council has introduced the Local Law in an effort to assist residents with problems relating to stray and nuisance cats. It was necessary for Council to make such a Local Law, as there is no State legislation relating to cats.

The Local Law aims to:

- Promote responsible cat ownership;
- Reduce the nuisance caused to the community by cats; and
- Limit the damage to and the loss of wildlife caused by cats.

CAT REGISTRATION

All cats (over the age of twelve weeks) must now be registered with Council. All registrations will be due on 31 October and are issued for either one or three years. Upon producing a pension card, eligible pensioners may register their cat(s) for half the normal fee. Registration helps you to recover your cat if it is lost and assists Council to encourage responsible cat ownership.

<u>Fees</u>	<u>1 year</u>	<u>3 years</u>
Sterilized	\$10.00	\$18.00
Unsterilized	\$30.00	\$75.00

Pensioners 1/2 the normal fee.

CAT IDENTIFICATION

All cats must now be identified with a collar and tag or a microchip. If using a collar and tag, the tag must include your name, correct residential address and phone number. The cat's registration tag must also be attached to the collar. If you do not want to use a collar then your veterinarian can insert a tiny microchip under your cat's skin that will provide your relevant contact details when scanned. If you would like this option to use this option, you should ensure your cat is micro chipped before applying to register your cat, as you will need to include the microchip number on the registration form.

Identification of your cat will ensure that your cat can be easily returned to you should it become lost, or trapped and impounded. Identification also enables Council's Community Rangers to easily determine if a cat is a pet, stray or feral animal.

WANDERING CATS

Cats that are allowed to roam the streets are a hazard to motorists and can be a nuisance to other residents. Unsterilised cats that wander are often responsible for unwanted litter of kittens that are frequently destroyed or dumped. Many abandoned kittens mature into adult feral cats with significant impacts on our native fauna.

Community Rangers will be able to trap and impound wandering cats. Owners should take care to ensure that their cat is confined to their own property.

LIMITS ON CAT NUMBERS

The new Local Law restricts the number of cats that may be kept at a particular property to two. Cat owners with more than two cats will be able to apply for a permit to keep more than two cats.

However, if the cats are sold or die, it is unlikely that they will be able to be replaced. When a permit is issued for additional cats, all cats must be registered. Kittens less than twelve weeks of age do not need to be registered with Council.

CAT PROHIBITED AREAS

A number of reserves have been identified as 'Cat Prohibited Areas'. Council intends to undertake intensive trapping in sensitive areas.

This approach will assist in addressing the feral cat problem while providing further impetus for cat owners living adjacent to conservation areas and reserves to ensure that their pets do not stray into these areas.

Further information about "Cat Prohibited Areas" is available from Council on request.

KEY COMPONENTS OF THE LOCAL LAW

- Registration of cats with Council;
- Cats to be identified via a microchip or a collar and tag;
- Cats to be kept on an owner's property with infringements for wandering cats. Powers will be given to authorised persons to seize wandering cats – this will be enforced via a humane cage trapping program;
- The operation of a Council cat pound and the ability to order the destruction of unclaimed cats, similar to the dog control process;
- The designation of 'Cat Prohibited Areas' for sensitive locations (i.e.. reserves and conservation areas). Infringements apply for cats found in prohibited areas; and
- Limitations on the number of cats per household to two, with permits required for larger numbers.

QUESTIONS?

Any questions on the Local Law and what it means for you as a cat owner may be directed to Council's Community Ranger Services on (08) 97270222, mobile 0417953959 or email info@capel.wa.gov.au