

Animal Welfare Network Statement on the Victorian Cat Management Strategy

The cost-of-living crisis and the lengthening kitten season are leading to significant increases in the number of cats and kittens arriving at animal welfare organisations every year.

In the six months from July to December 2023, Animal Welfare Network member organisations admitted 13,198 cats. Of these, only eight per cent (1,060) were reclaimed (Animal Welfare Victoria, Animal Fate Data, 2024).

The Animal Welfare Network consists of six organisations: Animal Aid, Australian Animal Protection Society, Geelong Animal Welfare Society, Lort Smith, The Lost Dogs' Home and RSPCA Victoria.

The network welcomes the release of the final Victorian Cat Management Strategy report. We believe that the strategy presents an opportunity to change community attitudes to cat ownership and improve the welfare of owned, semi-owned and unowned cats and kittens.

The Animal Welfare Network is calling on the Victorian Government to coordinate the delivery of the strategy including:

- Work with local Councils to embed the strategy into their Domestic Animal Management Plans.
- Support free desexing, microchipping and registration for cat owners from low-income households and residents who need support in the cost of living crisis.
- Support free desexing, microchipping, and registration for semi-owners of cats, if they agree to take full ownership.
- Provide larger grants for desexing initiatives for Councils and animal welfare organisations.
- Support prevention programs for cat containment including subsidies for cat enclosures.
- Provide information on responsible cat ownership to CALD communities that is culturally sensitive and takes account of different attitudes.
- Reduce both the statutory hold period and mandatory quarantine period, so cats can move through the shelter system more quickly.

