

## WA Rangers Association Conference 2015

### Notes from the Cat Panel

#### State wide database

Q - Is this possible?

- Since 1998 New South Wales has had a central database that holds information on registration and microchip details which is compulsory.
- The funding for the database is spread out between each council by the Department of Local Government in NSW.

#### Property confinement (trespass) local laws

Q - Case Study example – City of Busselton advised that they were told by the Department of Local Government and Communities that they could create a Property Confinement clause in their Local Law. The Joint Standing Committee however, took it out as they considered it 'repugnant' to the Act.

- A sub-committee will be considered for the Association Committee to petition for it's inclusion in the Act.
- The Act will need to be reviewed to include reference to this item. As advised by Julie Knight, the last amendments were from 2013 so the next review won't be slated for before 2018.
- Issues raised were that the Joint Standing Committee wanted the City of Busselton to list each specific location the cats were to be excluded from. The Local Law was 10 years old but the wander/confinement clauses were refused.
- Some localities may have sensitive areas such as wetlands etc that may be permitted to have cat exclusion zones.

#### Transfer of registrations between shires

Q - As with the Dog Act the Cat Act only states owners must notify their old Council of their new address/details. How do Councils cope with this as there is no requirement to transfer the details?

- Part 2, Division 5, Section 25 of the Cat Act provides that the information must be provided within 7 days.
- Dog Act – Part III, Division 3, section 26D states the same.
- Both Acts only say 'to the local government with which the dog/cat is registered with', there is no requirement to notify the new council.
- New South Wales example provided of Dangerous Dog database, all history, registration and microchip details in one central database, however, this database is only accessible by and for New South Wales animals. It is not open to other states to access either to read or add information.

### Access to Register information

Case study – South Australia has an incident database where all declared dangerous dogs are recorded, including microchip information. This database is accessible by Authorised Officers only.

Case Study – New South Wales has a comments section so that if a Dangerous Dog is moved without notifying the relevant Authorities the microchip database can record a comment on the record so the next Ranger scanning the dog can access the information.

### Cat Rescue numbers

Q - Has there been a change in numbers of cats at the Cat Haven since the Act?

- The Cat Haven has a fairly static population number but there are less kittens coming through.
- If the Cat Haven are aware of people not being willing to sterilise or authorise the sterilisation of their cats they will notify the relevant Local Government for their follow up.

### Cat Attack not an offence

Q - Under the Cat Act there is no offence for Cat Attack. Can cats be declared dangerous?

- Currently there are no provisions for declaration or attack in the legislation.
- Cat behaviour often comes down to situation, issues, circumstances etc.

### Classification of cats as feral vs stray

Q - There is no specific definition of how to classify cats as either stray or feral in the Act. What is the difference?

- Generally speaking –
  - Stray – has had previous human contact
  - Feral – has had no previous human contact
- 3-8 weeks of age is when human contact is required to not become a feral cat

### Rehoming

Q - Are there any 'hotspots' of rehoming, such as particular suburbs/locations that seem to adopt more cats?

- There have not been any figures analysed for that type of information.
- Anecdotally the Western Suburbs seem to have a higher adoption rate generally, possibly due to a higher disposal income and possible higher education on the subject.

### Trapping

Q - Can the general public trap?

- Members of the general public are able to trap on their own property and then the Authorised Officer can seize the trapped cat.

- Case Study example – Busselton residents can trap a cat and the Ranger will seize it for impounding
- Case Study example – Bassendean residents can assist the Rangers by using Town owned traps on their private property but they must sign off that they have received, read and understood the Trapping Guidelines and procedures. The Rangers can then seize the trapped cat for impounding. Bassendean Rangers will only seize cats trapped during authorised trapping programs, they will not accept privately trapped cats due to procedures and resources.
- Many Councils provide traps and will take the trapped cats.
- It is unknown how many cats are injured during trapping as the public are unlikely to come forward to report any injuries

#### Cat numbers surrendered/impounded

Q - Has there been an increase in the number of cats brought to the Cat Haven? What is the % of feral cats?

- There is not currently any statistics relating to the number of feral cats brought through.
- There has been a decrease in the number of cats brought from some Councils but an increase in numbers from others.

#### Statistics request

Q - Roz from the Cat Haven would like any available statistics relating to Cat issues.

- Particularly any information on Trap/Neuter/Release (TNR) programs
- Shire of Esperance works with SAFE and they have applied for TNP program funding.

#### Issues identified with the Cat Act

##### Curfew

- This can be done under Local Laws but there are enforcement issues.
- To be in the Act, however, it must be pertinent to the whole state.

##### Confinement

- This would mean that a curfew would be irrelevant.
- If this was included in the Act it would be State wide legislation and would not be 'piecemeal'.
- There is a lack of resources for enforcement of this issue.

##### Centralised registration system

- Relevant for the Dog Act also.
- New South Wales already have this in existence.

##### Boundary issues for Local Laws

- If discussed items were in the legislation it would be the same across the board and would not differ between Local Authorities.