

OPTION E:

compulsory de-sexing of cats (with exceptions)

Advantages

- enables early age de-sexing

Disadvantages

- over 90% owned cats already de-sexed
- would not solve identified problems
- major enforcement difficulties
- costs not justified by benefits

OPTION F:

Councils to set limits on the numbers of cats per household

Advantages

- reduces incidence of problems caused by roaming
- consistency with dogs
- provides mechanism to deal with cat hoarders

Disadvantages

- does not address problems of unowned cats
- need to prove ownership
- cost to owners of either disposing of cats or obtaining excess cat permit.
- less equitable for owners that would choose to have more than 2 cats
- cost of excess cat permit system

OPTION G:

Councils must appoint at least one cat management officer

Advantages

- facilitates preparation of cat management plans
- better responsiveness to complaints and enforcement of laws
- consistency with dogs

Disadvantages

- costs imposed on councils and ratepayers

POLICY OBJECTIVES

- Reduce health risks
- Reduce wildlife predation
- Reduce nuisances
- Reduce numbers of cats euthanized
- Improve the welfare of owned and stray cats;
- Facilitate civil justice and equity
- Achieve the right balance between local and state-wide laws

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- A Continuation of the legislative status quo (the base case);
- B Mandatory registration of all owned cats;
- C Power to seize cats found wandering at large;
- D Councils to impose night-time curfews on cats;
- E Compulsory de-sexing of cats (with exceptions);
- F Councils required to set limits on the numbers of cats per household;
- G Councils required to appoint at least one cat management officer.

The options are not mutually exclusive, any combination of them is possible.

PREFERRED OPTIONS

As identified in the RIA

- **Option C (seizure of cats wandering at large), plus**
- **Registration Sub-options B1 (annual registration of new cats) or B2 (annual registration of all cats), and**
- **Option G (appointment of cat management officers).**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OPTIONS FOR POSSIBLE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN CAT AMENDMENT LEGISLATION



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The Dog and Cat Management Board



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PURPOSE OF THE RIA

(Regulatory Impact Assessment)

To establish whether there is a case for action.

To do this, it must:

- Identify the problems
- Consider the range of feasible options
- Provide a cost-benefit analysis – ranking of options
- Determine the preferred option(s) of greatest net benefit for the community
- And provide a basis for consultation

RIA's do not consider emotional, political or policy considerations. These are no less important but not the purpose of an RIA. The consultation process should consider these factors when assessing the preferred options identified by the RIA.

UNCONFINED CATS – THE ISSUES

- Risks to human and animal health
- Predation of wildlife
- Nuisances
- Animal welfare
- Justice and equity
- Cat overpopulation (euthanasia)
- Inconsistent laws

OPTION A:

Continuation of the legislative status quo (the base case)

Advantages

- least cost option.
- no legislation required.

Disadvantages

- does not solve identified problems.
- continuation of problems will incur cost impacts and risks
- inconsistent treatment of dog and cat owners

OPTION B:

Registration of owned cats

Advantages

- greatly improves cat identification rates
- improves reuniting with owners
- reduces euthanasia rates
- reduces harbouring of strays
- provides user-pay funding
- equity with dog owners

Disadvantages

- imposes costs on 25% of households, especially low-income people
- difficult to prove ownership if unregistered
- cats can hang themselves on collars, additional cost of micro-chipping

OPTION B (1):

Phase in registration for all new cats

Advantages

- spreads costs over 15 year period.
- enables micro-chipping at first registration,
- provides consistent annual revenue
- allows flexible rebates for incentives
- owners can take costs into account when deciding to acquire cat

Disadvantages

- would take up to 15 years to be fully effective and realise benefits.
- difficulty of determining the age of cats.

OPTION B (2):

Register all cats by a specified date

Advantages

- enables identification of all owned cats
- enables micro-chipping of registered cats
- large cash injection for cat management
- better management of unowned cats

Disadvantages

- much higher initial outlays
- major enforcement difficulties
- if combined with micro-chipping, services may be unable to cope with demand.

OPTION B (3): Annual registration of cats

Advantages

- much lower initial outlays
- consistent annual revenue
- no large peak in revenue that would need to be invested and managed.
- if owners move, new Council funded
- no inequities if cat dies early or is lost
- owner details updated
- rebates possible after first registration

Disadvantages

- costs of annual renewal process
- no large cash injection for cat management

OPTION B (4):

Lifelong registration of cats

Advantages

- costs savings - no renewal process
- large cash injection for cat management
- lifelong registration of new cats would provide consistent annual revenue

Disadvantages

- much higher initial outlays for cat owners
- large peak in revenue would need to be invested and managed.
- if owners move, new Council not funded
- inequities if cat dies early or is lost
- owner details not updated
- no rebates after first registration

OPTION C:

Power to seize cats found wandering at large

Advantages

- targets problem cats
- reduces nuisance problems
- helps reduce spread of diseases
- welfare benefits for cats
- reduces predation of wildlife
- does not require registration of cats
- encourages voluntary identification
- residents' complaints can be addressed

Disadvantages

- costs (including euthanasia costs) not recovered if cats unclaimed
- cats would either need to be confined indoors or within enclosures e.g. cat runs. Costs of latter.
- welfare issues re: confinement of cats

OPTION D: Councils required to impose night-time curfews on cats

Advantages as for Option C plus:

- likely to result in higher confinement rates (provided it is enforced)
- consistency with dogs

Disadvantages as for Option C plus:

- applies only to owned cats
- would require identification of cats by micro-chipping, or registration with collars and tags
- more difficult to enforce than other options
- difficulty of cats inadvertently 'escaping' and owners trying to find cats in the dark.