



Shelley Hancock
Minister for Local Government

MEDIA RELEASE

Sunday, 25 April 2021

COUNCILS WARNED OVER CAT MANAGEMENT COMPLAINTS

The NSW Government has warned local councils that they risk losing companion animal funding if they fail to adequately manage domestic cats in their local communities.

Minister for Local Government Shelley Hancock said Liverpool City Council has been sent a formal 'please explain' notice by the Office of Local Government following complaints alleging it is refusing to accept cats at its pound.

"It is critical that the Government, local councils and other key stakeholders work together to promote responsible pet ownership and strengthen animal welfare standards in local communities across the State," Mrs Hancock said.

"The Government has received complaints alleging that Liverpool City Council is refusing to accept cats at its pound including animals surrendered by their owners as well as injured, sick and roaming cats rescued by the public.

"If this is true then the council is passing the buck on its responsibilities, contrary to the shared policy goals of the Government and councils to effectively manage cats in NSW.

"Poor cat management can exacerbate issues caused by stray, roaming, feral and aggressive cats including neighbourhood disturbance and impacts on native birds and animals.

"The NSW Government is providing almost \$6 million from the Companion Animals Fund to the State's 128 local councils this financial year, with more than \$31 million allocated in the past five years.

"This fund, which includes pet registration fees, pays for companion animal management by local councils including the operation of pounds and shelters, ranger services and education and awareness programs.

"Liverpool City Council alone has received more than \$535,000 from the Companion Animals Fund over the past five years.

“The Office of Local Government has now sent a formal notice calling on the council to explain its cat management practices and policies and show cause as to why it should not lose companion animal funding.

“The failure of councils to appropriately manage cats in their area can greatly contribute to cat management issues and place an unreasonable burden on their community, neighbouring councils, rescue groups and veterinarians who are left carrying the additional load.

“Any council not doing the right thing and shirking on their companion animal management responsibilities risks losing funding as the Government is not going to continue to pay them for a job they are failing to do.”

Mrs Hancock said the NSW Government is assisting local councils and communities to appropriately manage cats with a range of measures including:

- Introducing \$80 annual permits for owners of non-desexed cats over four months old to encourage desexing, prevent unwanted litters, ease the burden on pounds and shelters, and reduce euthanasia rates
- A one-off \$10 reduction to the lifetime cat registration fee to encourage higher registration rates and adoption of cats from council pounds and animal shelters
- Subsidising half-price pet registration for anyone adopting a cat or dog from council pounds and animal shelters, with more than \$1.6 million in savings to pet owners since 2015, and
- A funding boost of more than \$500,000 to help local councils meet increased food, vet, staffing and equipment costs at council pounds during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The NSW Government will continue to work with animal welfare organisations, councils and other key stakeholders to ensure we have a robust statutory framework for the appropriate management of cats in communities across the State,” Mrs Hancock said.

The Office of Local Government has formally requested all councils to review their cat management functions to ensure they are meeting requirements under companion animal laws and guidelines.

MEDIA: Jane Boag | 0419 417 514