

Cat Management in Tasmania – Discussion Paper

Easy Read

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1 Introduction

Many Tasmanians love cats as pets. People also value them for helping to control mice and rats. But cats can also annoy neighbours, spread disease, and harm native wildlife and farms. These different views make cat management a challenging and emotional issue.

The [Tasmanian Cat Management Plan \(2017-2022\)](#) set out a plan to improve how we manage cats. It includes goals to protect the environment, farming, and human health. Cat welfare is an important part of every action in the Plan.

Everyone has a role in managing cats. To reach the Plan's goals, it needs ongoing effort and teamwork from the whole community.

Together, we have made good progress, but there are still challenges. This means we need to keep looking for ways to improve. This discussion paper presents options to build on the current Plan.

This discussion paper asks for your ideas and feedback. We will review what you tell us and use it to help shape the new Tasmanian Cat Management Plan.

2 Background

2.1 CAT LAWS IN TASMANIA

Laws about cat management in Tasmania

Cats in Tasmania are managed under two main laws:

- the [Cat Management Act 2009](#) and,
- the [Biosecurity Act 2019](#).

Who is responsible for these laws

The Tasmanian Government is responsible for putting these laws into action. They:

- make sure people follow the rules,
- provide information to the community,
- issue permits.

Some council officers are also allowed to check that people follow these laws.

Cat Management Act 2009

The *Cat Management Act 2009* aims to:

- support responsible cat ownership,
- keep cats healthy and safe, and
- reduce harm to the environment.

Biosecurity Act 2019

The *Biosecurity Act 2019* allows the development of programs to help control feral cats.

Other Tasmanian laws related to cats

Other laws include:

- The [Firearms Act 1996](#). This law sets the rules for the use of firearms in Tasmania.
- The [Animal Welfare Act 1993](#). This law sets the rules to protect animals and ensure their welfare.

2.2 CAT GROUPS

All cats belong to the same species, called *Felis catus*. That's their scientific name. In this paper, cats are grouped into three types based on the Cat Management Act 2009. A cat can move between these groups during its life.



Domestic cat: A cat that someone owns or looks after.



Stray cat: A cat that lives near people and may get some food, water, or shelter from them.



Feral cat: A cat that lives in the wild and does not rely on people.

2.3 ROLE OF CAT MANAGEMENT FACILITIES

Who can run a cat management facility

A person or a group can run a cat management facility in Tasmania. But they must be approved under the *Cat Management Act 2009*.

The Act also states that a council facility used to hold cats is considered a cat management facility. But most councils do not have resources, such as funding, vets, staff, or space, to run one.

What these facilities do

These places help cats in many ways. They:

- Take in cats that people give up.
- Find new homes for cats.
- Help lost cats get back to their owners.
- Look after cats in boarding or emergencies.
- Teach people how to care for cats.
- Help sick or hurt cats.

- Vaccinate, desex, and microchip cats in their care.
- Offer cheap desexing and microchipping for pet cats.

What happens when a cat arrives

Cats that come into a facility must be desexed and microchipped before being returned to their owners.

Facilities can charge owners for caring for the cat and for these services.

When a cat arrives, staff scan it for a microchip as soon as they can. If the cat has a microchip, staff contact the owner. If the owner does not pick up the cat within the holding time (3–5 days), the facility may rehome the cat or euthanise it.

How facilities support

These facilities help the community comply with the Act because anyone who traps a cat must take it to one of them. This rule is in place to protect the welfare of trapped cats. It is not an offence for a cat to roam beyond its owner's property.

Cat management facilities accept trapped or surrendered cats by appointment only. This helps them make sure they have the right staff and space to care for the cat.

How facilities decide what happens to cats

Staff at cat management facilities decide what to do with each cat based on the cat's needs and best practices.

Putting down healthy, friendly cats does not fix the long-term problem of too many cats in the community. It also does not reduce the problems caused by roaming cats.

Studies show that putting down cats can have serious effects on the mental health of the staff and volunteers who work in these facilities^{1 2}. It can also affect the wider community's well-being.

How do they help the community

Cat management facilities work to keep cats from coming into their care. They help by:

- Teaching people how to care for their cats.
- Offering low-cost desexing and microchipping.
- Helping councils with cat programs.

How these facilities are funded

The government does not run cat management facilities. These facilities are not-for-profit community services. They rely on donations and fundraising to cover their costs. They may also:

- Ask for a donation when someone surrenders a cat.
- Ask for a small fee to take a trapped stray or feral cat.

Where the facilities are in Tasmania

There are two cat management facilities in Tasmania:

- [Ten Lives](#) in the South, and
- [Just Cats](#) in the north.

Just Cats received State Government funding to build a new facility in Burnie, in Tasmania's north-west.

Tasmania's access challenges

Even with a third facility in the northwest, many people will still find it hard to reach a cat management facility because the state is so spread out. People may still need to travel long distances, and those living on King Island or Flinders Island will still need to fly or take a ferry. People in rural areas will also have limited transport options, which continues to make access difficult.

3 Building on the first Plan

What has been done so far

The first Tasmanian Cat Management Plan started in 2017. Since then, many groups and people have worked together to improve cat management.

Some key improvements are:

- More people caring for their cats properly.
- Better ways to manage feral cats.
- More education in communities.

Why cat management is still challenging

Uncontrolled breeding of stray cats has created large cat groups in every council area. Many of these cats have poor welfare. They can cause problems in neighbourhoods and harm native wildlife and public health. Most of the cats that enter cat management facilities are strays. This puts a lot of pressure on these organisations and their resources.

What still needs to improve

There are still gaps in responsible cat ownership. Improving how people care for their cats will help cat welfare. It will also reduce illegal breeding and the sale of animals. It will also reduce problems caused by cats in neighbourhoods.

We also need better ways to manage feral cats on farms and in the natural environment. These ways must be practical, humane, and long-lasting.

What this paper covers

This discussion paper has three parts. The three parts are: domestic cats, stray cats, and feral cats.

Each part explains the main issues. Each part also gives possible ways to manage cats. These ideas build on the first Tasmanian Cat Management Plan.

Where to find the full laws

This paper uses plain English to help explain the laws. For complete details, please refer to the [Cat Management Act 2009](#) and the [Cat Management Regulations 2022](#). You can find these, along with the [Biosecurity Act 2019](#), at www.legislation.tas.gov.au.

4 Domestic Cats

4.1 MICROCHIPPING AND DESEXING OF CATS

What the laws require

In Tasmania, the law says cat owners must microchip and desex their cats by the age of 4 months. There are some exceptions to this law. These rules are important parts of responsible cat ownership.

Why desexing is important

Female cats can have many litters each year. Desexing is a surgical procedure that prevents both female and male cats from having kittens. This prevents unwanted kittens.

Why microchipping is important

Microchipping is when a tiny chip is put under the cat's skin so it can be identified if it is lost. The microchip stores the owner's details in a database. Cat management facilities, vets, and other authorised people can read the microchip and find the owner.

What changed in 2022

Cats can start breeding at around four months of age. Because of this, the law changed in 2022 to support better responsible cat ownership. Cat owners must now desex and microchip their cats by four months old, rather than six months.

Who is helping and how

The State Government has worked with many groups to increase desexing and microchipping. These groups include councils, vets, and animal welfare groups.

They work together to teach people how to care for their cats. They also offer cheaper desexing and microchipping. These programs run in the places that need the most help.

4.2 CAT REGISTRATION

Dog registration

For many years, local councils in Australia have needed dog owners to register their pets. This helps manage animals and makes it easier to find and return lost dogs to their owners.

Cat registration

Cat registration rules are different across Australia (see Appendix, Table 1). Some states or territories require you register your cat. In some places, the local council makes the rules. Some areas do not need cat registration at all.

When a cat is registered, the state or council adds the cat's details to a database. They use the cat's microchip number to link the cat to its owner and home address.

Why registration helps

If people renew their cat registration on time, it helps keep their owner's contact details up to date. It also helps the state or council know how many pets live in the area. This makes it easier to enforce animal management laws ³.

Cat registration in Tasmania

In 2020, the Tasmanian Government changed the law, but still did not make cat registration compulsory. Councils were already allowed to make their own local rules, called by-laws. A by-law is a rule made by a council that only applies in that local area. For example, Kingborough Council made a Bruny Island Cat By-law in 2018. This rule allowed the council to require people to register their cats, but they chose not to charge a fee.

Cat registration fees

Councils in Tasmania can choose how much people pay to register a cat. Each council has different costs, so prices vary. Some councils in Australia give cheaper fees to people with concession cards. But when you also must pay for microchipping and desexing, it can still be too much money for some families.

How registration fees are used

Some councils in other states use cat registration money to help the community. In Victoria, this money helps run pounds and shelters, pay staff, and support programs that encourage good pet care. There is also a small state fee that helps pay for research into dog and cat welfare.

Cost of registration

Councils in Australia say looking after cats costs a lot of money. Some councils say it costs 7 to 10 times more than the money they get from registration fees ¹⁴. In Queensland, the rule requiring cats to be registered was removed in 2013 because it

was too costly and difficult for councils to manage ([Agriculture and Forestry Legislation Amendment Act 2013 \(QLD\)](#)).

Most councils in Australia require cat registration, but only about one-third of cats are registered³. This is likely because there are not many checks or penalties, so many people do not register their cats.

Questions 1 - 4:

1. What do you think are the good and bad things about making cat registration compulsory, compared with only microchipping?
2. Do you think cat owners should have to register their cat, like dog registration?
Yes or No. If you said No, skip to Question 5.
3. If you said Yes, should owners have to pay a fee to register their cat? **Yes or No. If you said No, skip to Question 5.**
4. If you said Yes, what should the fee be used for? (Examples: registering cats, cat welfare research, managing cat issues)

4.3 BREEDING AND SELLING OF CATS

Who can breed cats

The *Cat Management Act 2009* (the Act) sets the law for breeding cats in Tasmania. A person may only breed a cat if they are a registered cat breeder or hold a valid Cat Breeding Permit.

Becoming a registered breeder

To be a registered cat breeder, a person must join an approved cat organisation. They must follow the rules under the Act and those of their organisation.

Approved organisations give each breeder an ID number. Breeders use this number when selling cats. People can contact the organisation to check that the breeder is real and that the cats are purebred.

Breeding with a permit

A person who is not a registered breeder and wishes to breed a cat may apply for a permit to breed a cat. They can apply to either the State Government or their council.

Each permit has its own number. A permit is for one cat only, lasts for a set time, and has strict rules. Some of these rules include:

- desexing the breeding cat,
- desexing and microchipping the kittens, and
- showing proof of these things.

Illegal breeding

Even with these rules, illegal cat breeding still happens in Tasmania. Teaching people and giving support can help improve this. Some owners cannot afford to desex their cat or do not have access to the service.

Helping a cat owner with costs

The Tasmanian Government and other groups have run low-cost desexing and microchipping programs. These programs are offered to people in communities that need the most support.

“Last litter” programs help reduce the number of unwanted kittens. In these programs, a cat management facility desexes a mother cat after she has given birth. This means she cannot have any more litters. The owner must give the kittens to the facility, where they can be cared for and rehomed.

Sale of cats

A person does not need to be a registered breeder or hold a cat breeding permit to sell a cat in Tasmania. The definition of sell under the *Cat Management Act 2009* includes:

- trade,
- give away,
- take consideration for,
- transfer ownership of, and
- offer for sale.

Definition of a buyer and seller

For this section, a person who sells, gives away, rehomes, or otherwise transfers ownership of a cat is referred to as a *seller*. A person who buys a cat, acquires or obtains ownership of a cat, is referred to as a *buyer*.

Requirements for sale

The law says that if someone sells a cat, the cat must be:

- Desexed (cannot have kittens).
- Microchipped (has an ID chip).
- At least eight weeks old.
- Free from external parasites.
- Treated for worms once.
- Vaccinated.

Advertising a cat for sale

When advertising a cat, the seller does *not* have to say:

- the microchip number,
- if the cat is desexed,
- its vaccination history.

The seller also does not have to give any proof to the buyer.

Many cats do not meet the requirements of sale. Cats are often sold on online platforms. This makes enforcement difficult because sellers can stay anonymous.

Buying from illegal sources

Buyers do not have to check whether a seller is following the law when selling a cat. This may tempt some people to buy cats from illegal sellers or breeders. This is because the cats may be cheaper than those from trusted sources.

Some buyers may think they are helping the cat by giving it a good home. But buying from illegal breeders supports these unlawful practices. It gives these sellers money to keep breeding and selling cats in the wrong way. Also, if the seller has not microchipped or desexed the cat, the buyer will have to pay for these costs.

Laws in Victoria

In Victoria, cats and kittens can only be sold or given away through the [Pet Exchange Register](#). Anyone who wants to sell a cat must register and obtain a special source number. This source number and the cat's microchip number must be shown in every advert. The source number is also needed when a cat gets a microchip so it can be traced.

Questions 5-6:

5. What could help make sure that people who breed and sell cats are doing it legally?
6. Should people selling cats have to say in their ads that the cat meets all legal requirements?

4.4 CONTAINMENT OF A CAT TO AN OWNER'S PROPERTY

What is cat containment

Cat containment means keeping a pet cat on its owner's property. This can be indoors or in outdoor enclosures, cat runs, or cat-proof fencing⁵.

Benefits of cat containment

Keeping cats contained helps protect them from:

- getting hurt in fights,
- being hit by cars,
- being attacked by other animals, and
- catching diseases^{5 6 7}.

Containment also helps:

- reduce behaviour like roaming,
- protect native wildlife, and
- make the community safer and cleaner^{8 9}.

These benefits make containment an important part of being a responsible cat owner.

Containment laws in Tasmania

In Tasmania, the Cat Management Act 2009 does not make cat owners keep their cats on their own property. In 2020, the Greens and an independent member suggested adding a rule to make containment compulsory. Parliament did not agree, so the law did not change.

The Act can require cats to be contained by using:

- Multiple-cat permits.
- Cat breeding permits.
- Council by-laws.

By-laws let local councils make their own cat containment rules. For example, the Kingborough Council made the [Bruny Island Cat By-Law 2018](#). This rule says that people living on Bruny Island must always keep their cats contained. The aim is to protect wildlife, livestock, cats, and the community, and to reduce the number of unwanted and stray cats on the island.

Cat containment in Australia

Across Australia, councils are making rules to keep cats at home. These rules aim to reduce problems caused by roaming pet cats. Some rules include nighttime curfews, rules for certain suburbs, and 24-hour containment.

Many councils in Victoria have nighttime cat curfews ⁴. These curfews mean cats must stay on their owner's property during certain night hours. Nighttime curfews can help protect animals that are active at night. But they do not help animals that are active during the day ^{6 9}.

Cats that roam during the day can still get hurt. They can also catch diseases and cause problems on other people's properties. Because of these issues, some places have stricter rules to keep cats contained.

The Australian Capital Territory has a rule that cats must always be contained. The law has a "grandfather" rule. This means cats born before 1 July 2022 are allowed to roam in some areas.

How containment laws are enforced

Councils often trap and impound cats after receiving reports of illegal roaming ¹. The traps often must be set and left. Council officers must check the trap, usually within 24 hours. Some councils let residents hire traps to catch roaming cats on their property. The person who traps the cat is often responsible for taking the cat to a council pound or facility ^{1 2}. If no one collects the cat within the legal holding period (usually 3–8 days), the council may rehome it or euthanise it.

Challenges

Councils have many problems enforcing cat containment rules, such as:

- roaming cats are hard to catch, and
- some community expectations are hard to meet ¹⁰

It can also be hard to prove a cat was roaming during a nighttime curfew

More than half of the cats taken to shelters or pounds have no ID, like a microchip, collar, or tag. Without an ID, councils cannot find the owner or give fines.

Why do some owners not follow the rules

Communities only see the benefits of cat containment when owners follow the rules. But some things make this hard ¹¹ (see Appendix, Table 2), such as

- the cost of building cat enclosures or cat-proof fences, and
- rental rules that stop tenants from making changes to contain their cat ^{1 10}.
- what people believe about responsible cat ownership, and
- whether owners think they can keep their cat contained ^{5 6 11}.
- the cat's behaviour - some cats may escape through doors, windows, or garages ¹.

What we still don't know

Many places use laws to address problems caused by roaming cats and improve cat welfare. But in Australia, there are limited studies that show how well these laws work ^{1 10}. More research is needed to fill these gaps.

Questions 7- 11:

7. What role do you think cat owners should have in reducing impacts on wildlife, neighbours, and the community?
8. What challenges might households face if stronger cat management rules were introduced in the future?
9. Are there other ways to encourage responsible cat ownership without keeping cats contained?
10. If new cat management rules were introduced, what monitoring or enforcement methods would be fair and practical?
11. When, if ever, do you think stronger cat management rules would be reasonable?

5 Stray cats

5.1 FEEDING STRAY CATS AND CAT COLONIES

Stray cats are common

Stray cats are common in most Australian cities and towns ¹².

Surveys show that 9% to 22% of people feed a stray cat (or a cat they don't think they own) every day ^{13 14 15}.

Feeding leads to more stray cats

Feeding stray cats makes the problem worse. When stray cats are fed, they survive longer and have more kittens ¹². This leads to large groups of cats, called colonies. In Tasmania, some colonies have 150–200 cats. Cat colonies are found in every council area, but no single group oversees managing them.

Welfare and community impacts

Stray cats often have poor welfare because they lack safe shelter, regular food, and vet care ^{16 17}. They can suffer from disease, injuries, and hunger.

Stray cats can also:

- harm native wildlife by hunting and competing for food,
- spread diseases to animals and people, and
- cause nuisance in the community ¹⁴.

Feeding does not stop cats from hunting; they are natural hunters and may still hunt wildlife ¹⁸.

Laws about feeding in Tasmania

The Cat Management Act 2009 does not ban feeding stray cats.

But councils can use the Local Government Act 1993 or their own by-laws to address health and nuisance issues, including feeding bans.

Examples:

- Kingborough Councils [Bruny Island Cat By-Law 2018](#): feeding stray or feral cats is banned.
- [Glenorchy City Council Animal Management By-Law 2025](#) people must not feed or encourage pest animals, including unowned cats.

Feeding ban in other states

Feeding stray cats is common across Australia. But Queensland is the only place with a statewide ban (under the [Biosecurity Act 2014](#)). Enforcing this rule is hard when many people feed stray cats. For example, an estimated 60,000 people in Brisbane feed an average of 1.5 cats they do not own, totalling 90,000 cats ¹⁵.

Enforcement challenges

Many people feed stray cats, so it can be hard for authorities to prove who is doing it. It is easier to enforce feeding bans in areas where cat colonies gather because feeding occurs in one spot, making evidence easier to collect ¹⁵.

Even when feeding bans are enforced, fines often do not stop the behaviour. In Queensland, some people kept feeding stray cats even after being fined many times

¹. This is because people feed stray cats for many reasons, such as:

- kindness or pity,
- wanting company,
- feeling responsible for the cats, and
- not trusting authorities to manage the cats well ¹⁹.

Why penalties aren't enough

Fines may stop some feeding, but they do not manage the cats themselves. Cats often stay in the area if they have been fed for a long time, unless they are trapped and removed.

When people feed stray cats on private property, they should take responsibility for trapping and surrendering the cats.

In practice, many people are unwilling to do this because of:

- costs,
- the emotional difficulty of surrendering the cats, or
- a belief that it is not their job to manage the situation.

Why a coordinated approach is needed

Some agencies must keep returning to the same properties because people continue to feed stray cats. This creates a cycle that costs a lot of money and time. It is hard to fix the problem unless the person feeding the cats cooperates.

To solve the problem in the long term, different organisations need to work together and plan their actions. Ongoing, coordinated work is needed for real success.

Questions 12- 15:

12. Do you think feeding stray cats should be banned? Yes or No.
13. What do you think are the biggest challenges or problems with banning the feeding of stray cats?
14. What are some solutions to those challenges or problems?
15. How do you think cat colonies should be managed?

6 Feral cats

6.1 FERAL CAT MANAGEMENT

What are feral cats

Feral cats live and breed in the wild. They survive on their own and do not rely on people for food, water, or shelter. Feral cats are hard to find because they are mostly active at night. People often see signs of them, like tracks or prey remains, rather than seeing the cats themselves.

Feral Cats in Tasmania

Feral cats are found in many parts of Tasmania. Right now, they cannot be removed from the main island.

The government is working to remove feral cats from smaller islands where it can be done. These islands include:

- Three Hummock Island.
- King Island.
- Maria Island.
- Bruny Island.
- Little Dog Island.

How Felixer Grooming Traps Work

On some offshore islands, feral cat programs use Felixer grooming traps. These are special devices designed to target feral cats.

Felixer devices:

- are easy to move around,
- use AI, lasers, and cameras to recognise animals,
- only fire when they identify a cat,
- spray a toxic gel onto the cat's side, and
- the cat then grooms itself, licks the gel, and dies soon after.

These traps are only used on islands where native animals like devils, quolls, and wombats are not present, so that they won't be mistaken for cats.

As technology improves, Felixer traps may be used in more places because they will be better at telling cats apart from other wildlife.

6.2 TAKING PART IN NATIONAL FERAL CAT MANAGEMENT

Biosecurity Tasmania and NRE Tas

Biosecurity Tasmania is part of the Tasmanian Government. It works to protect Tasmania from pests and diseases. It is part of the Department of Natural Resources

and Environment Tasmania (NRE Tas). This department looks after Tasmania's natural environment and cultural heritage.

National Groups

Biosecurity Tasmania is part of the National Feral Cat Taskforce. This group shares ideas and plans to manage feral cats.

National Plans

NRE Tas helped write the [Threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats 2024](#).

This plan explains how Australia can reduce problems caused by feral cats. It also lists actions to protect native animals so they can survive for a long time.

6.3 HUMANE EUTHANASIA OF FERAL CATS

Feral cat control must be justified, humane, and targeted. It must also minimise the risk of harm to wildlife and other animals.

When human euthanasia is allowed

Under the Cat Management Act 2009, a cat may be humanely euthanised:

- on primary production land by the person managing or occupying the land, or someone acting for them, and;
- on private property, if the cat is found more than 1 km from any home. A cat cannot be trapped and then moved to meet the 1 km requirement.

Why the 1km rule exists

The 1 km rule is designed to protect roaming pet cats, as research shows pet cats usually do not travel more than 1 km from home²⁰. Reducing the distance could increase the chance that a pet cat is mistaken for a feral cat and destroyed.

Areas where cats are not allowed

The Tasmanian Government recognises the serious threat that cats pose to native wildlife. Cats are banned from certain places, including:

- National Parks.
- Conservation Areas.
- State Forests.

- Private land with a conservation covenant.
- Areas declared prohibited under the *Cat Management Act 2009*.

Authorised people can trap, seize, or humanely destroy cats found in these places.

Councils can also declare prohibited areas or cat management areas. Authorised people can carry out cat management activities in these areas.

Questions 16-18:

16. How can rural landowners or managers be supported to better manage feral cats in areas that are important for wildlife or farming?
17. Should the allowed distance from a house for humane euthanasia of cats on private land be reduced to less than 1 km? **Yes or No. If you said No, skip to Question 18.**
18. If you said Yes, what distance do you think is suitable?

7 Other

Questions 19-21:

19. What kinds of education, rewards, or support programs would help people be responsible cat owners?
20. Should cat management be different in urban, peri-urban, and rural areas? If yes, how?
21. Is there anything else you would like to say about improving cat management in Tasmania?

8 Next Steps

You can respond to the discussion questions in three ways:

1. Online

Use the [online response form](#)

2. Email

Send your responses to: catmanagement@nre.tas.gov.au

3. Mail

Post your written responses to:
Biosecurity Tasmania

Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania
GPO Box 44
Hobart TAS 7001
Attn: Cat Management Discussion Paper

We need your submission by **5:00 pm** on **Friday 15 May 2026**.

For more information on the discussion paper go to our website: [Cat Management in Tasmania - Discussion Paper](#)

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10 Appendix

The Discussion Paper asks these questions for you to think about and share your thoughts on:

Domestic cats

1. What do you think are the good and bad things about making cat registration compulsory, compared with only microchipping?
2. Do you think cat owners should have to register their cat, like dog registration?
Yes or No. If you said No, skip to Question 5.
3. If you said Yes, should owners have to pay a fee to register their cat? **Yes or No. If you said No, skip to Question 5.**
4. If you said Yes, what should the fee be used for? (Examples: registering cats, cat welfare research, managing cat issues)
5. What could help make sure that people who breed and sell cats are doing it legally?
6. Should people selling cats have to say in their ads that the cat meets all legal requirements?
7. What role do you think cat owners should have in reducing impacts on wildlife, neighbours, and the community?
8. What challenges might households face if stronger cat management rules were introduced in the future?
9. Are there other ways to encourage responsible cat ownership without keeping cats contained?
10. If new cat management rules were introduced, what monitoring or enforcement methods would be fair and practical?
11. When, if ever, do you think stronger cat management rules would be reasonable?

Stray cats

12. Do you think feeding stray cats should be banned? **Yes or No.**

13. What do you think are the biggest challenges or problems with banning the feeding of stray cats?
14. What are some solutions to those challenges or problems?
15. How do you think cat colonies should be managed?

Feral cats

16. How can rural landowners or managers be supported to better manage feral cats in areas that are important for wildlife or farming?
17. Should the allowed distance from a house for humane euthanasia of cats on private land be reduced to less than 1 km? **Yes or No. If you said No, skip to Question 19.**
18. If you said Yes, what distance do you think is suitable?

Other

19. What kinds of education, rewards, or support programs would help people be responsible cat owners?
20. Should cat management be different in urban, peri-urban, and rural areas? If yes, how?
21. Is there anything else you would like to say about improving cat management in Tasmania?

Summary of the domestic animal laws in each state/territory of Australia

The Northern Territory does not have territory-wide companion animal laws, so it is not included below.

Tasmania

- **Desexing:** Yes - by 4 months old or before the cat is sold
- **Microchipping:** Yes - by 4 months old or before the cat is sold
- **Registration:** No
- **Containment:** No
- **Feeding stray or feral cats:** No ban
- **Laws:**
 - [Cat Management Act 2009](#)
 - [Cat Management Regulations 2022](#)

Victoria

- **Desexing:** No
- **Microchipping:** Yes - by 3 months old or before the cat is sold
- **Registration:** Yes - by 3 months old
- **Containment:** No
- **Feeding stray or feral cats:** No ban
- **Laws:**
 - [Domestic Animals Act 1994](#)
 - [Domestic Animals Regulations 2015](#)

New South Wales

- **Desexing:** Yes by 4 months old
- **Microchipping:** Yes - by 3 months old, or before the cat is sold
- **Registration:** Yes - by 3 months of old

- **Containment:** No
- **Feeding stray or feral cats:** No ban
- **Laws:**
 - [Companion Animals Act 1998](#)
 - [Companion Animals Regulation 2018](#)

Australian Capital Territory

- **Desexing:** Yes - by 3 months old or before the cat is sold
- **Microchipping:** Yes - by 3 months old or before the cat is sold
- **Registration:** Yes - by 2 months old
- **Containment:** Yes
- **Feeding stray or feral cats:** No ban
- **Legislation:**
 - [Domestic Animals Act 2000](#)
 - [Domestic Animals Regulation 2001](#)

Queensland

- **Desexing:** No
- **Microchipping:** Yes - by 3 months old or before the cat is sold
- **Registration:** No
- **Containment:** No
- **Feeding stray or feral cats:** Yes - feeding feral cats is banned under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*
- **Laws:**
 - [Animal Management \(Cats and Dogs\) Act 2008](#)
 - [Animal Management \(Cats and Dogs\) Regulation 2019](#)

Western Australia

- **Desexing:** Yes - by 6 months old or before the cat is sold
- **Microchipping:** Yes - by 6 months old or before the cat is sold
- **Registration:** Yes – by 6 months old
- **Containment:** No
- **Feeding stray/feral cats:** No ban
- **Laws:**
 - [Cat Act 2011](#)
 - [Cat Regulations 2012](#)

South Australia

- **Desexing:** Yes - by 6 months old or within 28 days after being sold.
- **Microchipping:** Yes - by 3 months old or before the cat is sold
- **Registration:** No
- **Containment:** No
- **Feeding stray/feral cats:** No ban
- **Laws:**
 - [Dog and Cat Management Act 1995](#)
 - [Dog and Cat Management Regulations 2017](#)

Table 1 Barriers that stop people from keeping their cats contained: categories, types, and what they mean.

Category	Barrier	Description
Ability	Physical	It is too hard to stop the cat from roaming

Category	Barrier	Description
Ability	Psychological	The cat acts like the boss, so it gets what it wants
External barriers	Time	Too busy; no time to set things up
External barriers	Cost	It is too expensive to keep the cat contained or build an enclosure
External barriers	Resource	They do not have what they need to keep the cat contained
Social norms	History	People have let their cats roam for a long time
Social norms	Current norm	Other people do not contain their cats, so they don't feel like they need to either
Social norms	Regulation	It's not the law, so people don't have to
Beliefs	Cat nature	People think cats need to roam to be happy and that keeping them inside is cruel
Beliefs	Roaming	People think its fine because their cat doesn't roam far
Beliefs	Issue	People believe pet cats aren't the problem – only feral cats are

Category	Barrier	Description
Beliefs	Locality	People think roaming is more okay in rural areas than in cities
Beliefs	Pest control	People think roaming cats are needed to control mice and rats
Beliefs	Predation	People believe their cat doesn't hurt wildlife
Awareness	Knowledge	They don't know to keep a cat contained
Awareness	Consequence	They don't see roaming as a problem for wildlife, cat welfare, or disease
Motivation	Enthusiasm	They are not interested or don't want to put the effort in
Motivation	Convenience	It feels inconvenient, like having to clean litter trays
Motivation	Emotional detachment	They care about the cat, but don't feel strongly connected to it

Source: McLeod, L.J., Hine, D.W., & Bengsen, A.J. (2015). Born to roam? Surveying cat owners in Tasmania, Australia, to identify the drivers and barriers to cat containment. *Preventative Veterinary Medicine*, 122, 3



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