



CAT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Engagement Report

22 July 2021 – 10 Dec
2021

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Summary

The City is developing a Cat Management Plan with an aim to encourage and enable responsible cat ownership, in order to protect native wildlife and the welfare of cats, prevent nuisance cat behaviour and address other associated cat-management issues.

At the February 2021 Ordinary Meeting of Council, Council passed a motion to direct the CEO to engage with the community and other relevant stakeholders prior to preparing a plan to manage cats in the City of Melville.

The Cat Management Plan will contain a wide range of initiatives based on the Australian Government's National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare recommendations that the core to effective animal management requires control of reproduction, identification and location. It will balance the needs and interests of our many cat owners whilst protecting native wildlife and amenity for the rest of our community.

Cat management is a complex issue, and to ensure we balance the needs and interests of our community, we engaged widely through four distinct stages:

1. Community feedback panel
2. Community survey and outreach – community were invited to provide feedback by completing our online survey or by attending one of our listening posts
3. Stakeholder interviews with subject matter experts, cat and wildlife industry experts
4. Public comment – the community were invited to provide comment on the final draft plan.

This report outlines the engagement methods, outcomes and communication tactics for Stages 1, 2 and 4 of the engagement.

Total Participation Numbers

- 28 panel members participated in the engagement
- 69 people engaged face to face at the listening post locations
- 1,000 households received a direct invitation to participate as part of sample
- 1,039 surveys were completed online
- 97 valid submissions received during public comment period

Engagement Overview

The objective of the engagement was to consult the community on how we can work better together to manage cats for the health, welfare and safety of both cats and native animals, and to test knowledge of current cat management and level of support for future management.

The level of engagement chosen, based on the International Association of Public Participation spectrum was inform - consult.

Stage 1 – Community Feedback Panel

At the March 2021 Community Feedback Panel, the panel discussed cat management and the role the City of Melville plays in the management of cats. 28 panel members discussed the potential impacts on native wildlife, background history and current management practices.

Stage 2 – Community Outreach

Community were invited to complete an online survey available on the dedicated Melville Talks project page. In line with the Disability and Access Inclusion Plan, alternative methods of engagement (in person and over the phone) were made available upon request. Additional to the online survey, community were invited to attend a listening post at three locations. Consultation took place from 14 May – 30 June 2021.

Survey – an invitation was sent to 1,000 households to participate in an online survey. The survey sought feedback on cat ownership, management and knowledge. Alongside the direct invitation to participate, traditional and digital communication tactics were used to promote and bring awareness of the engagement. A total of 1,035 surveys were completed.

Community pop-up sessions – three community pop-up sessions were held at Palmyra Farmers Market, Hawaiian Melville and Stockland Bull Creek. 69 community members were engaged face to face through these sessions.

Stage 3 – Stakeholder Conversations

Stakeholder interviews took place with subject matter experts, cat and wildlife industry experts .

Stage 4 – Public Comment

Community were invited to complete a formal submission form via the dedicated Melville Talks project page. In line with the Disability and Access Inclusion Plan, alternative methods of engagement (in person and over the phone) were made available upon request.

The submission form sought feedback and support on the proposed actions and objectives identified in the draft Management Plan. Traditional and digital communication tactics were used to promote and bring awareness of the opportunities to provide comment.

Consultation took place from 8 November to 3 December 2021. 109 total submissions were received. 12 submissions were removed due to incompleteness and duplication, leaving 97 valid submissions.

Stage 1 – Community Feedback Panel

At the March 2021 Community Feedback Panel, a presentation was provided to the Community Feedback Panel on context, background and current processes on Cat Management at the City of Melville. The panel discussed cat management and the role the City of Melville plays in the management of cats. 28 panel members discussed the potential impacts on native wildlife, background history and current management practices.

Key findings

- Panel was generally against the roaming of cats
- Recommendation to better educate cat owners and non-cat owners on current practices and requirements

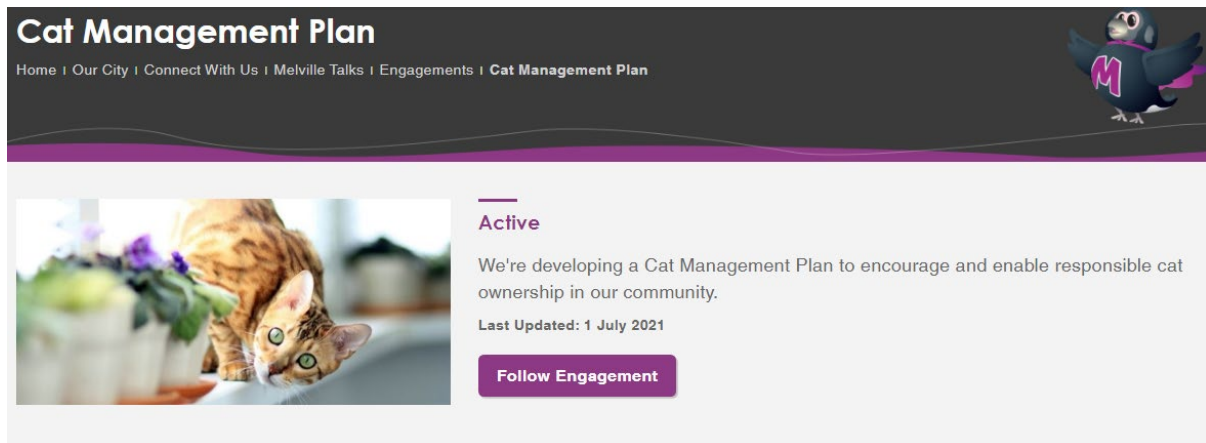
Feedback received from the panel assisted in the development of the Frequently Asked Questions and communication material.



Stage 2 – Community Outreach

Methods and activities

1. Survey available online, in person and over the phone
2. Community were invited to share information about cat ownership, experience and level of support.
3. Pop up engagement at Palmyra Farmers Market, Hawaiian Melville and Stockland's Bull Creek
4. Patrons were invited to share their level of support and to test knowledge. Online engagement was also promoted.



Key findings

- Equal representation of cat and non-cat owners
- 97% of participants informed us that they were local residents
- 50.42% informed us that two cats should be the limit per household
- 54.1% of cat owners identified as owning 1 cat in their household
- 39.91% of cat owners described their cat lifestyle as indoor and indoor with cat run/enclosure, with 51.2% of cat owners allows their cat to roam
- 47.33% of cat owners who allow their cats to roam believe cats need to be outside to remain happy and healthy
- 70.78% of cat owners informed us that their cat does not bring home wildlife, whilst 24.89% of owners receive occasional wildlife

General comments

There is general support for 'responsible' pet ownership, however there were a few misconceptions in the community about what actions are required under the current Cat Act

and what management is currently being implemented by the City, indicating more work needs to be done by the City to educate and promote them.

- Strong community support for prohibiting cats from bushland, night time curfew, confinement and effective control, however feedback received in the comments shows strong support against this.

Those in favour of a cat management were due to:

- Concern for wildlife, many having experienced cats hunt and kill birds, and other animals
- Experiences with cat nuisance issues such as noises from cats fighting, mating at night creating disturbing people's sleep, defecating in gardens and other places, and also experience with their own cats being attacked and dogs barking due to cats entering properties.
- Cats preying on other pets e.g. rabbits, guinea pigs, caged birds etc.
- Concern also for the health and safety of cats themselves
- Comparisons made between the requirements for cats and all other domestic animals

Reasons given for opposition of cat management, local law and cat curfew included:

- Issues in training cats to be home at a specific time
- Issues in cats going missing during curfew
- Concerns around senior cats, lifestyle and habits
- Issues in confining cats who prefer to be outside and free
- Confusion around confinement
- Penalties associated with non-compliance
- Increased cat euthanasia, impoundment, cruelty and abandonment.

Who we spoke to

- 1,104 participated in the engagement
- 1,035 survey responses
- 69 in person at pop up events
- 96.8% of participants informed us that they resided in the City of Melville (816 people responded to this question. 790 informed us that they resided in the City)
- Split representation of cat and non-cat owners from survey respondents (497 / 535) providing the City with a cross representation of community

The Truth about cats

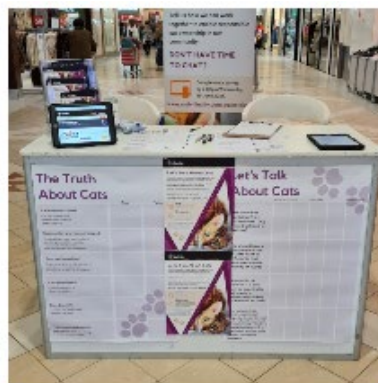
In person and survey combined results

Participants were invited to share their knowledge regarding current management and legislation on cats. 998 participants completed (920 online)

Total votes	TRUE	UNSURE	FALSE
Cat bell collars save wildlife from injury or death by a cat	432	255	301
By law all cats over six months of age living in the City of Melville must be registered with the City, microchipped and sterilised	776	175	35
There is no limit to the number of cats that can be kept per household in the City of Melville	113	310	557
Cats cause injury or death to wildlife	904	42	31
Anyone can breed cats without a licence	175	299	505
Keeping cats from wandering is better for their health	649	170	161

Key findings and outcomes

- Better education on legislation and current practices
- Community were happy that City officers were out engaging with local community



Stage 3 – Public Comment

Community were invited to view the draft Cat Management Plan and provide formal comments on the actions listed within the draft, including level of support. 109 submissions were received in total. 12 submissions were removed due to duplication and incomplete submissions. Total valid submissions was 97.

Traditional and digital communication tactics were used to promote and bring awareness of the opportunities to provide comment.

Consultation took place from 8 November – 3 December 2021.

Methods and activities

Submission form available online at Melville talks

In line with Disability and Access Plan, in person and over the phone were made available.

Key findings

- 96.91% of participants were local residents of the City of Melville
- 56.07% of participants were not involved in previous engagements for this project
- 39.18% of participants were cat owners, whilst 58.76% were non-cat
- Facebook, direct email invitation and eNewsletter was rated the highest in how the community heard of the opportunity to provide comment
- 84.54% of participants support the development and promotion of new and existing community education initiatives on the health and welfare benefits of keeping cats indoors.
- 93.82% of participants support the investigation of a cat local law to restrict the number of cats allowed per household and prohibit cats from certain areas e.g. native bushland and reserves.
- 88.66% of participants support the City to advocate the State Government, through the South West Group, to review the Cat Act 2011 to include night time cat curfews and specify the number of cats allowed per household
- 85.56% of participants support the City to advocate the South West Group to take a lead role in, and provide support to securing funding to conduct a scientific study on the impact of cats in native bushland and reserves before and after implementation of a cat local law.
- 87.63% of participants support the conduct and promotion of annual animal registration renewal process in accordance with the Cat Act 2011.
- 80.41% of participants support the investigation and implementation of additional promotional opportunities (e.g. discounted fees) for annual animal registration renewals.
- 83.5% of participants support the development and promotion of new and existing community education initiatives on options to keep cats confined e.g. cat runs.
- 92.76% of participants support the continuation to implement feral animal control program.
- 75.26% of participants support the development and promotion of new and existing community education initiatives on community responsibilities in relation to semi-owned and unowned cats i.e. feeding, general welfare, reporting etc.

- 88.66% of participants support the review and re-sign of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Cat Haven for facilitation of impounded cats.
- 89.69% of participants support the full review of all processes related to nuisance and trapping cats.
- 85.56% of participants support the development and promotion of new and existing community education initiatives on nuisance and trapping cats.
- 85.57% of participants support the promotion of community education campaigns to encourage rehoming or adoption of cats from animal shelters.
- 90.72% of participants support the promotional awareness campaigns and support to address unnecessary surrender and abandonment of cats.
- 74.23% of participants support the City to advocate the State Government, through the South West Group, for funding to subsidise cat runs in support of cat owners who wish to transition their cats to indoor living.
- 69.07% of participants support the establishment of a partnership with the Cat Haven to host ongoing events at City of Melville facilities where people can positively interact with cats (e.g. cat yoga).
- 68.04% of participants support the raising of awareness through community education of the benefits and positive role cats play in households and families.

Who we spoke to

- 97 valid submissions received
- 96.91% of participants informed us that they resided in the City of Melville

Attadale	10.31%	10
Alfred Cove	2.06%	2
Applecross	4.12%	4
Ardross	3.09%	3
Bateman	1.03%	1
Bicton	5.15%	5
Booragoon	8.25%	8
Brentwood	0.00%	0
Bull Creek	5.15%	5
Kardinya	5.15%	5
Leeming	7.22%	7
Melville	12.37%	12
Mount Pleasant	4.12%	4
Murdoch	3.09%	3
Myaree	1.03%	1
Palmyra	10.31%	10
Willagee	10.31%	10
Willetton	0.00%	0
Winthrop	4.12%	4
Other	3.09%	3
Total Respondents: 97		