



Protect your cat,
protect your wildlife



northern
beaches
council

Cats are good for you!

Cats enjoy the high life in an apartment but are equally happy in a large family household. Cats can be playful or peaceful, talkative or quiet, are usually affectionate and love someone who is happy to provide endless attention.

Children with pets have higher self-esteem and are shown to demonstrate greater empathy. Pet owners also generally enjoy better health, including lower risk of cardiovascular disease. Cats make ideal pets because they are generally quiet, hardy, clean, independent and require little training or exercise.



Be a responsible cat owner

Before buying a cat, you should take the time to consider the costs of keeping a cat including vet fees. As a responsible cat owner you should:

- Desex your cat as early as possible to avoid unwanted kittens. This also reduces straying and antisocial behaviour
- Worm your cat so your cat and family remain healthy
- Vaccinate your cat against diseases
- Microchip and register your cat
- Keep a recent photo of your cat so it's easy to identify if lost
- Consider a breed that prefers to stay in the comfort of your home
- Keep your cat indoors, especially at night. Cats that roam at night can kill wildlife, and are three times more likely to be killed by cars, dogs or fighting
- Put a collar and bells on your cat. This will alert wildlife if your cat ventures outside
- When going on holiday make sure your cat is looked after
- Never feed stray cats, it encourages them to hang around and can spread disease to your own cat or other pets. Report strays to your Council
- Never dump a cat. If you can't look after it, find it another home or take it to the Animal Welfare League or Cat Protection Society or RSPCA
- Never allow your cat to bite and scratch
- Seek advice from a vet or animal behaviour specialist
- Consider the cost of keeping a cat, including veterinary care and food and ensure you can afford to care for the animal for the duration of its life

Cat ownership and the law

In NSW more than 150,000 cats and dogs are lost or stolen every year. To ensure you can be contacted, the Companion Animals Act 1998, requires all cats and dogs in NSW to be microchipped by 12 weeks of age and registered for life by six months.

Registering your cat in NSW is a two-step process. The two step process enables you to have your cat desexed before registration, so that you can pay the lower lifetime-registration fee. Your pet is not registered until both steps are complete.



1. Microchipping


In NSW all cats, other than exempt cats*, must be microchipped by 12 weeks of age, or before being sold or given away, whichever happens first. If you sell or give your cat or dog away or your contact details change, you must notify your local Council within 14 days.

2. Registration

(This is a legal requirement). All cats, other than exempt cats*, must be registered by six months of age. The registration fee is a once-only payment, which covers the cat for its lifetime in NSW, regardless of any changes in ownership. You are encouraged to have your cat desexed before registering it. Discounted registration fees apply to desexed cats.

If you purchase your cat from a breeder they will microchip the cat and submit a Change of Details Form to their local Council. If you have a cat that's not already microchipped, your vet will implant a microchip and send a Permanent Identification Form to your local Council.

In either case Council will send you a Certificate of Identification and Lifetime Registration Form for you to fill in and return to Council with a one off lifetime registration payment. If your cat is not microchipped, registered and wearing identification like a collar or tag, it might not be able to be returned and you may receive a fine.



* A full list of exempt cats can be found in the Companion Animals Act 1998

Protecting Wildlife

All cats are natural and efficient hunters and do not have to be hungry to hunt. As a result they can kill a significant number of native animals each year and quickly decimate local fauna populations.

Research has shown cats seek out particular areas for hunting, such as bushland, making repeated visits to successful hunting grounds. Cats are opportunistic hunters and extremely patient - they can sit and wait for hours at the entrance to a burrow or near a bird's nest.

Mother cats often bring live prey home to allow their kittens to practice hunting making young animals particularly vulnerable, such as baby birds or possums.

Cats can also spread disease to native animals through bites and scratches. For example, toxoplasmosis, which can cause blindness and damage to the nervous and respiratory systems, can be passed through a cat's saliva to animals and even people. Wound infection is common in native animals after a cat attack and few survive longer than 36 hours.

Some native animals which are preyed upon by cats are now so rare they are protected under the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016.





Photo: John Taylor



Help protect native wildlife

- Provide a cat free area for birds to feed and lizards to sunbathe
- Provide a birdbath for drinking and bathing out of reach of your cat
- Provide a possum nesting box high in a tree
- Report injured wildlife to organisations such as WIRES or Sydney Wildlife
- Plant native plants and shrubs.
- Dense prickly ones are especially good
- Know where your cat is at all times
- Keep your cat away from areas such as bushland
- Place special cat netting along walls and fences to prevent your cat climbing over*
- Create an adventure playground for your cat in your garden using mesh enclosures*

*** You may need approval from Council to build fence extensions or cat enclosures if the works fall outside the State Environmental Planning Policy.**



Wildlife Protection Areas

These bushland reserves have been identified to support populations of vulnerable native wildlife, such as possums, birds and lizards. To help protect these animals, cats are not allowed in these areas. Councils carry out trapping programs to remove stray cats that are in Wildlife Protection Areas. If your cat is found in a Wildlife Protection Area you may be fined.

Visit your Council's website for a list of Wildlife Protection Areas.

Useful Contacts

Northern Beaches Council

northernbeachescouncil.nsw.gov.au - 1300 434 434

RSPCA

rspcansw.org.au - 9770 7555

Cat Protection Society

catprotection.org.au - 9519 7201/9557 4818

WIRES

wires.org.au - 13 00 094 737

