

# RESPONSIBLE CAT OWNERSHIP

**Cats can provide great joy and companionship, however deciding to become a cat owner also means you take on a number of responsibilities. When a cat becomes part of your family you become responsible for its health, welfare and the impact it has on your surrounding community.**

## YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

As a responsible cat owner you should:

- Desex your cat
- Provide your cat with sufficient food & water
- Play with your cat and provide adequate toys and stimulation
- Identify your cat with a collar and a bell to warn wildlife
- Keep your cat confined to your property
- Responsible cat owners have a legal requirement to:
  - Register and microchip their cat
  - Prevent their cat from wandering
  - Only keep the required number of cats per household (1 per unit, 2 per house).

## MICROCHIPPING YOUR CAT

Cats can be escape artists when it comes to a collar. Microchipping your cat is the best way to ensure your cat is easily identified and can be reunited with you if lost.

All cats must be microchipped before:

- Reaching 12 weeks of age
- Being sold
- Being given away.

If your cat ends up at the vet or the Council Pound and isn't microchipped, Council has no way of letting you know that it has been found.

Once microchipped, ensure your contact and address details are current with both Council and the company in which your microchip was provided.

Fines apply if your cat is not registered or microchipped.

## DESEXING YOUR CAT

Desexing your cat will not only help reduce unwanted litters but also reduces your registration fee and helps to keep your cat safe.

Desexed cats can live a happier and healthier life. They are generally less likely to get diseases such as uterine infections, mammary and ovarian diseases in females and perineal hernia, testicular and prostate cancer in males.

Your cat's "normal" behavior will remain unaffected. Desexing commonly reduces behavior problems such as roaming, aggression, mounting and spraying in males. In females it eliminates heat cycles, mating behavior and false pregnancy.



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### CONTAINING YOUR CAT

Although cats are wonderful companions and easily fit into domestic life, they are predators by nature and will go searching for mates, defend territory and hunt wildlife outdoors. Wandering cats are also at risk of injury from cat fights, dogs, snakes or being hit by a car.

Roaming cats often cause disputes and anxiety between neighbours by causing dogs to bark, by fighting with other cats or by defecating in neighbouring gardens.

To protect your cat and minimise disruption to your neighbours, keep your cat confined to your property at all times. Cats kept inside generally live much longer than cats that are allowed outside. Most cats adjust quickly and are content to stay indoors.

To assist your cat in becoming accustomed to being in a closed environment:

- Decide on how you will confine your cat – taking into consideration your budget
- Confinement could include – cat proofing your yard, confining your cat to inside the house or building an enclosure attached to your house that will allow your cat to come in and out
- Offer a comfortable sleeping area, kitty litter and water
- Provide stimulation for your cat such as a scratching pole, toys or an enclosed run
- Cats can be easily trained to go into an enclosure by aligning feeding times with confinement of the cat
- Ensure your cat has a dry and warm area with good ventilation.



### HOW MANY CATS CAN I KEEP?

Council Local Laws stipulate the type and number of animals that can be kept in a town designated area. No more than two cats can be kept over the age of 3 months on an allotment in the town designated area.

No more than one cat can be kept over the age of 3 months on multi-residential premises (units).

### Cat registration

It is a legal requirement for cats to be registered within the Maranoa Regional Council area. Cat registration makes it easier for lost cats to be identified and reunited with their owners. If your cat is not registered or microchipped it is possible that it may be rehomed or as a last resort euthanised.

The registration period runs from 1 July until 30 June each year, with renewals issued during June of each year. Registration discounts are offered for desexed cats and pensioner concessions are available.

### Roaming complaints

In the first instance, we encourage neighbours to discuss and attempt to resolve neighbourhood conflicts, including wandering pets. It is common that owners are often unaware of the nuisance that their animal is causing.

If you are not comfortable talking to your neighbour or you don't know where the animal lives, contact Council on 1300 007 662 to discuss further. We can:

- If the cat is contained and the owner can be identified:
  - Return the cat to the owner with a warning to confine the cat to their property
  - Issue a fine or
  - Issue a compliance notice to the owner to secure the animal
- If the cat is not contained:
  - Offer the hire of a cat trap.

**It is important to remember that by law cats are not allowed to roam.**

**Council are not legally obligated to collect animals that are found on private land.**