

This paper provides a summary of the key findings from research on the Banyule Council desexing program which resulted in highly successful benefits over several years in cat management.<sup>i</sup>

**“Traditional methods used for cat management based on trap–adopt or euthanize programs have been ineffective, with cat-related calls and cat impoundments continuing to increase, resulting in many healthy cats being euthanized.** This has detrimental effects on the mental health of animal management officers, staff in shelters and council facilities, and cat caregivers.”

“In Australia, outcomes for cats are considerably worse than for dogs in shelters operated by animal welfare agencies and in animal management facilities operated by local governments (council pounds) [1,2]. Return-to-owner rates are usually much lower than for dogs because few impounded cats are identified with a microchip or tag [1]. Because of overcrowding in pounds and shelters, timid or fearful cats and young kittens are often euthanized upon admission [3]. Across Australia, **approximately 33% of cats entering shelters and pounds are euthanized, with the worst-performing quartile of local governments euthanizing 67% to 100% of cats** [3].”

“AMOs can find the enforcement of domestic cat legislation challenging, mainly due to the lack of resources and funding to set up effective preventative programs. **The lack of effective programs to prevent kitten births, as well as the resulting high euthanasia rates,** has a negative impact on the job satisfaction and psychological well-being of AMOs [4].”

“The program proposed and approved by the city of Banyule was that **sterilization, microchipping, and the first year of registration would be funded by the council.** The purpose of this program was to increase ownership responsibilities for owned and stray cats being fed by residents (semi-owned cats) and to reduce unwanted kittens being born and, therefore, the number of cats and kittens killed in the council-contracted facility (CPS). **This was provided at no cost for all owned cats and semi-owned cats** in the target areas.”

“The total labor and vehicle costs of AU \$290 per cat-related call were taken into consideration when the call was first logged at council with a customer service officer and then transferred to the local laws team, and it included the time from initial AMO contact to all actions associated with the complaint, including but not limited to the initial phone contact with the resident, travel time and fuel, site visits, and trapping and impounding a cat. In addition, there were costs charged to the city of Banyule under their agreement with CPS and were associated with care in the animal management facility for the eight-day mandated hold period (initially AU \$80 per cat increasing to AU \$150 in 2018).”

**“When the medium-intensity targeted program resumed in 2017/18, and the trapping process changed from enforcement-orientated to assistive, cats impounded city-wide decreased by 51% over four years, from 284 in 2016/17 to 134 in 2020/21”.**

**“...the traditional methods of trapping wandering and nuisance cats have not resulted in long-term reductions in cat-related calls to councils. However, following the implementation of a microtargeted free sterilization program for owned and semi-owned cats, marked reductions in cat-related calls, impoundments, euthanasia, and costs were realized, similar to that reported in US programs. It is recommended that urban cat management policies and programs are revised and, instead of being focused on a traditional compliance-based approach, are focused on being assistive, helping owners and semi-owners have their cats sterilized and identified with a microchip.”**

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<sup>i</sup> Impact of a Local Government Funded Free Cat Sterilization Program for Owned and Semi-Owned Cats  
<https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/14/11/1615>