

It is recommended that instead of trapping and culling, that **evidence-based research of successful free desexing programs be considered which show these provide better value for money, and return on investment, in reducing the number of cats, the number of roaming cats, abandoned and stray cats (semi owned or unowned) and impacts to wildlife.** Refer to the success of a number of desexing programs: APWF Community Cat Programs in Queensland; Victorian Banyule Council research; NSW Liverpool Council; and NSW Weddin, Parramatta, Campbelltown & Hornsby councils; and RSPCA NSW.<sup>i</sup>

**Impacts of trapping and culling include many negative impacts for council staff, veterinarians, and community cat rescuers and carers.** Trapping and culling/ euthanasia of cats:

**“Increases euthanasia of healthy and treatable cats and kittens** in council pounds, shelters and veterinary clinics because the more cats impounded, the more cats euthanased”;

**“Increases well-documented and life-threatening mental health damage to staff and community residents caused by the euthanasia of healthy cats and kittens including depression, traumatic stress and increased suicide risk.”<sup>ii</sup>**

The **impacts on community cat rescuers should not be underestimated when “stray” cats are trapped and euthanased**, especially where these cats have been desexed, medically treated, and are under a rehoming program or by individual rescuers.

Recent Australian research has highlighted the impact to cat carers (e.g. cat rescue groups) from the Newcastle Port culling/killing of roaming cats, who were in a colony (group) being managed and supported by cat rescuers. This was a shocking incident initially reported in several media outlets and on social media. The major finding includes:

**“...the severity of the adverse psychological impacts, and the morbidity rate amongst the cat caregivers... was far greater than would be expected as a risk to the community if the cats had remained at the site... potential legal ramifications should be considered before authorities intentionally choose a method of management that is likely to inflict substantial harm on community members.”<sup>iii</sup>**

USA based research, on proactive people-welfare focused approaches for animal welfare initiatives aligned with One Welfare, over enforcement approaches:

**“Person-centered and culturally competent policies and programs that focus resources on addressing root causes of pet health and welfare issues as opposed to an emphasis on code enforcement can create more positive, scalable, and sustainable improvements in human, other animal, and environmental health and welfare outcomes. This shift from punishment-oriented approaches to support-based models of animal control aligns the animal welfare field with the modern human social justice movement.”<sup>iv</sup>**

<sup>i</sup> <https://petwelfare.org.au/community-cat-program-faq/> and Community Cat Program News – Australian Pet Welfare Foundation

Banyule: <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/14/11/1615>

Weddin & Parramatta : <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:AP:4d1d5b58-63b5-4a70-8196-212fded377d1>, <https://weddinlandcare.com.au/milestone-for-keeping-cats-safe-at-home-project>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://petwelfare.org.au/2022/09/02/key-issues-to-consider-related-to-mandated-24-7-cat-containment/>

<sup>iii</sup> The Impact of Lethal, Enforcement-Centred Cat Management on Human Wellbeing: Exploring Lived Experiences of Cat Carers Affected by Cat Culling at the Port of Newcastle <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/13/2/271>

<sup>iv</sup> Punishment to Support: The Need to Align Animal Control Enforcement with the Human Social Justice Movement <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/10/10/1902>