



Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council (QPRC)

PO Box 90,
Queanbeyan NSW
2620

Email: council@qprc.nsw.gov.au

7 March 2023,

Dear QPRC,

RE: Review of Cat Containment Policy

I am writing on behalf of the Conservation Council ACT Region, to welcome the recently proposed Cat Containment Policy and provide some feedback, specifically that the policy should be extended across the whole Queanbeyan-Palerang Region as quickly as possible.

The Conservation Council ACT Region is the peak non-government environment organisation for the ACT region. Since 1981, we have spoken up for a healthy environment and a sustainable future for our region. We harness the collective energy, expertise and experience of our more than 40 member groups to promote sound policy and action on the environment. We campaign for a safe climate, to protect biodiversity in our urban and natural areas, to protect and enhance our waterways, reduce waste, and promote sustainable transport and planning for our city.

As recognised in the policy summary available on your website, cats pose a significant threat to biodiversity in our region. Free-roaming cats, both feral and pet, are highly efficient predators. Since colonisation, they have pushed over 30 native species to extinction, including the Eastern hare-wallaby that was once local to our region. Today, cats imperil another 123 species,¹ which is a palpable impact on the backdrop of the extinction crisis that we are already facing.² Cat containment is a positive step towards minimising the negative impact that cats have on the environment.

Not only are free-roaming cats costly to the environment, but they also carry an excessive financial burden. Recent research has shown that cats are the most costly invasive species in Australia as approximately \$18.7 billion has been spent trying to control their populations since 1960. Indeed, they are the most costly invasive species in our region.³ Cat containment is a positive mechanism to

¹ <https://invasives.org.au/our-work/feral-animals/cats-in-australia/>

² cite,

³ <https://blog.csiro.au/pest-plants-and-animals-cost-australia-around-25-billion-a-year/>

reduce this burden as it will limit breeding of free-roaming populations and allow for better identification and management of feral, and semi-feral individuals.

Considering the above, The Conservation Council supports a blanket approach to cat containment in the Queanbeyan-Palerang Region. The Council does not recommend a grandfathered approach, as has been done in the ACT. A grandfathered approach is difficult to enforce and confusing. This is due to the approach resulting in locations where cats are both required to be contained, but also some that are allowed to be roaming.

In addition to a blanket cat containment policy, the Conservation Council also recommends that:

- Community education and engagement be conducted to promote responsible pet ownership.
- Citizen science is considered to raise awareness of cat behaviour.
- Policies be implemented to improve cat desexing rates.

The Conservation Council commends the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council for the intention to implement cat containment and encourages the outlined recommendations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elle Lawless". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elle Lawless

Executive Director