

Media Release

Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Agriculture



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A 10-YEAR PLAN TO PROTECT CATS AND WILDLIFE IN VICTORIA

The Andrews Labor Government will develop Victoria's first comprehensive cat management strategy to encourage responsible ownership and support better welfare for both cats and native wildlife.

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas visited the Cat Protection Society of Victoria in Greensborough to announce the development of a 10 year state-wide strategy, funded by \$1.3 million from the *Victorian Budget 2022/23*.

Cat management is a significant and complex issue. There are over 224,000 registered cats across Victoria, with many more unregistered, unowned or feral cats in our urban and natural environments.

These cat populations can overlap – sometimes in areas of high biodiversity – creating animal welfare and environmental issues, as well as challenges for local communities.

Animal welfare organisations such as the RSPCA will play a key role in development of the new strategy. Ensuring more cats are desexed is a key advocacy goal of the RSPCA.

Victorians will also have the chance to share their views and ideas as part of extensive stakeholder and public consultation. This will incorporate targeted discussion with key groups including councils, animal shelters, rescue groups and public land managers.

In addition to developing a state-wide cat management strategy, the new funding will support education campaigns and grants to encourage cat containment and promote responsible cat ownership.

The Cat Protection Society of Victoria is a not-for-profit animal shelter and feline-dedicated veterinary clinic that has been operating for over 70 years.

It is caring for and rehoming more than 1600 cats per year to give them an opportunity for a loving, safe, and healthy home.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas

"Cats are beloved pets for many Victorians but also a threat to native wildlife and biodiversity – we need to ensure we're best supporting the welfare of cats as well as our precious native wildlife."

"While Victoria has high rates of registration and desexing, we also know that we have high numbers of unowned and feral cats. That's why we are working to deliver the first cat management strategy."

Quote attributable to Cat Protection Society of Victoria Chief Executive Officer Ian Crook

"Each year, over 1600 stray and surrendered cats seek refuge and are cared for at our adoption shelter – we work hard to ensure everyone is rehomed and can live a healthy life with a loving family."