

# Media Release

**The Hon Ros Spence MP**  
Minister for Agriculture  
Minister for Community Sport  
Minister for Carers and Volunteers



Saturday, 2 March 2024

## BETTER PROTECTION FOR VICTORIA'S CATS AND WILDLIFE

The Allan Labor Government is promoting responsible cat ownership with free and low cost desexing programs as consultation on the state's first long term cat management strategy begins.

Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence today launched a \$300,000 trial program to increase cat desexing rates in targeted areas and released the draft cat management strategy for consultation – inviting Victorian cat owners and the wider community to have their say.

From 5 March, local councils can apply for grants of up to \$25,000 to deliver free and low-cost desexing to target areas with problem cat populations or support Victorians who may be experiencing financial hardship.

The program aims to increase cat desexing rates, reduce impoundment and euthanasia rates, and improve cat welfare and council registration rates.

The draft cat management strategy looks at ways to improve cat welfare through responsible cat ownership, increasing cat desexing rates – particularly for regional and low-income Victorians – and provide support to expand cat containment programs and education programs.

The strategy also addresses the challenges of unowned and semi owned cats, which make up majority of the cat intake at pounds and shelters. It will look at ways to promote full and responsible ownership of these cats and target programs to capture, desex and adopt them out.

The strategy will also explore ways to improve feral cat management and facilitate increased information sharing between local councils of successful cat management practices. It will also seek to deliver more flexible council registration options, that will incentivise cat owners to register, desex and better contain their cats.

Cat management is a significant and complex issue – with more than 227,000 registered cats and a significant number of unregistered, unowned, or feral cats in Victoria.

Unowned and feral cat populations often overlap with biodiverse environments, increasing animal welfare and environmental issues, as well as challenges for local communities.

The strategy has been developed following extensive research, expert insights, and engagement with councils, animal welfare organisations, land managers, conservation groups and veterinary professionals.

The Labor Government invested \$1.3 million from the *Victorian Budget 2022/23* to develop three cat management initiatives including a cat management strategy.

For more information on the cat management strategy visit, [engage.vic.gov.au](https://engage.vic.gov.au).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence

*“Our goal is to create a comprehensive strategy that promotes responsible cat ownership and management across Victoria - to help better safeguard our native wildlife.”*

*“We’re helping to improve cat welfare with access to free or low cost cat desexing in areas with problem cat populations or for vulnerable Victorians.”*

**Media contact:** Siobhan McKenna 0480 147 921 | [Siobhan.mckenna@minstaff.vic.gov.au](mailto:Siobhan.mckenna@minstaff.vic.gov.au)