



ACT
Government

ACT Cat Plan

Implementation Plan

© Australian Capital Territory, Canberra 2021

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced by any process without written permission from:

Director-General, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development
Directorate, ACT Government,
GPO Box 158, Canberra ACT 2601.

Telephone: 02 6207 1923

Website: www.environment.act.gov.au

Printed on recycled paper

Accessibility

The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events and venues as accessible as possible.

If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like to receive this publication in an alternative format, such as large print, please phone Access Canberra on 13 22 81 or email the Environment and Planning Directorate at environment@act.gov.au

If English is not your first language and you require a translating and interpreting service, please phone 13 14 50.

If you are deaf, or have a speech or hearing impairment, and need the teletypewriter service, please phone 13 36 77 and ask for Access Canberra on 13 22 81.

For speak and listen users, please phone 1300 555 727 and ask for Access Canberra on 13 22 81.

For more information on these services visit

<http://www.relayservice.com.au>

Acknowledgement of country

We acknowledge the Nggunawal people as Canberra's first inhabitants and Traditional Custodians. We recognise the special relationship and connection that Nggunawal people have with this Country. Prior to the displacement of Nggunawal people from their land, they were a thriving people whose life and culture was connected unequivocally to this land in a way that only they understand and know and is core to their physical and spiritual being. The segregation of the Nggunawal people from Culture and Country has had long-lasting, profound, and ongoing health and well-being effects on their life, cultural practices, families, and continuation of their law/lore. We acknowledge the historic interruption of the Nggunawal people of Canberra and their surrounding regions. We recognise the significant contribution the Nggunawal people have played in caring for Country. For time immemorial they have maintained a tangible and intangible cultural, social, environmental, spiritual, and economic connection to these lands and waters.

ACT Cat Plan Implementation Plan

ACTION	Time-Frame (years)	Implementation Milestones	Lead Agency	Alignment with Animal Welfare and Management Strategy (AWMS)
ACT CAT PLAN				
ACT Cat Plan	1-10	Develop, implement and review progress of an ACT Cat Plan. ^{1,2,3,4}	EPSDD TCCS	<p>ACT Cat Plan has been developed under the Animal Welfare and Management Strategy.</p> <p>Objective 4: Where animals are managed for social, economic and environmental purposes, this happens in accordance with best practice.</p> <p>Outcome: 4.1 – Responsible pet ownership is promoted to manage the impact of domestic species on the environment and community.</p> <p>Action: 4.1.2 – Develop and implement policies and management plans to promote responsible pet ownership and reduce the impact of domestic species on the environment and the community.</p>
STRATEGY 1: PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE CAT OWNERSHIP				
<p>Action 1 Promote responsible cat ownership through community education and engagement.</p> <p>» Improve available information on what it means to be a responsible cat owner, including making information accessible to the whole community; for example by producing materials in languages other than English.</p>	1-2	<p>Community education campaigns developed and implemented, as part of community education campaign on animal welfare and management responsibilities, including “Paws for Thought” campaign. The campaign should include a focus on the importance of de-sexing your cats.^{1,2}</p> <p>Improve information available on responsible pet ownership and caring for a pet cat^{1,2,3}, including:</p> <p>» Make information available in a range of languages at points of sale prior to and in conjunction with enforcement activities.</p>	TCCS (lead) EPSDD (support)	<p>Objective 2: There are ongoing and measurable improvements in animal welfare and management practice in the ACT, as assessed against best practice standards and community expectations.</p> <p>Outcome: 2.1 – Custodians, animal industries and the community have the information, knowledge and skills to fulfil their animal welfare and management responsibilities</p> <p>Action: 2.1.1 – Undertake a community education campaign to promote and influence public understanding and opinions on their animal welfare and management responsibilities.</p>
<p>Action 2 Raise awareness of impact of roaming cats on wildlife and ACT residents, including through research and citizen science. Examples include:</p> <p>» Cat Tracker, (http://www.discoverycircle.org.au/projects/cat-tracker/)</p> <p>» Canberra Nature Map (http://canberranaturemap.org/)</p>	3-5	<p>Research projects and citizen science projects supported. Examples include:</p> <p>» ACT participation in national ‘Cat Tracker’ Project¹</p> <p>» Canberra Nature Map incorporate feral cat sightings¹</p> <p>» Promote awareness of citizen science projects to report sightings, for example, FeralCatScan¹</p>	EPSDD	As above.

1. Funded through existing resources.
2. Additional funding resourcing also being sought.
3. Unfunded. Subject to additional funding being sought and approved by Government.
4. Explore cost recovery or fee for service.

ACTION	Time-Frame (years)	Implementation Milestones	Lead Agency	Alignment with Animal Welfare and Management Strategy (AWMS)
<p>Action 3 Improve cat de-sexing rates by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » working with community partners such as vets, animal shelters and cat breeder associations to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase access to affordable de-sexing • increase uptake of microchipping and pre-pubescent de-sexing prior to sale, transfer or return » working with veterinary professionals and other stakeholders to support cat owners in meeting requirements for pre-pubescent de-sexing. 		<p>Consultation with vets, breeders and re-homing organisations to identify opportunities for improving de-sexing rates, including on sale, transfer or return.^{1,2}</p> <p>Develop and implement approaches including compliance, incentives and/or availability of de-sexing services, to encourage de-sexing, including offering discounted de-sexing vouchers for cat owners.^{1,2,3}</p>	TCCS	<p>Outcome: 2.2 — Implement approaches to support people's commitment and ability to fulfil their animal welfare and management responsibilities.</p> <p>Action: 2.2.1 — Introduce non-punitive regulatory mechanisms to incentivise positive animal welfare and management practices.</p> <p>Objective 5: Compliance and enforcement of animal welfare and management issues is efficient and effective.</p>
STRATEGY 2: IMPROVE COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT				
<p>Action 4 Amend the <i>Domestic Animals Act 2000</i> to support compulsory registration of cats.</p>	1-2	<p>Review the <i>Domestic Animals Act 2000</i> and amend where necessary to allow compulsory cat registration.</p>	TCCS	<p>Objective 1: The ACT has contemporary animal welfare and management laws.</p> <p>Outcome: 1.2 — ACT regulatory framework facilitates positive animal welfare and management practices and encourages improvements in animal welfare outcomes.</p> <p>Action: 1.2.4 — Improve animal management systems and processes for animal identification and reunification, including through registration systems.</p>
<p>Action 5 Introduce a compulsory registration scheme for cats as part of a pet registration model to improve capacity for cat identification and reunification with owners.</p>	2	<p>Investigation of improved animal management systems and processes for cat identification and reunification, including introduction of cat registration.^{3,4}</p>	TCCS	<p>Objective 1: The ACT has contemporary animal welfare and management laws.</p> <p>Outcome: 1.2 — ACT regulatory framework facilitates positive animal welfare and management practices and encourages improvements in animal welfare outcomes.</p> <p>Action: 1.2.4 — Improve animal management systems and processes for animal identification and reunification, including through registration systems.</p>
<p>Action 6 Implement a public education campaign using a system of warnings and information, in concert with a program of compliance and enforcement. Pursue repeat offenders for offences against the <i>Domestic Animals Act 2000</i>.</p>	3-5	<p>Compliance and Enforcement Program developed and implemented.^{1,2,3}</p>	TCCS	<p>Outcome: 5.1 — Custodians, animal industries and the community are aware of and comply with their legal responsibilities.</p> <p>Action: 5.1.1 — Undertake a review of the current compliance and enforcement regime to identify gaps and areas for improvement.</p> <p>Action: 5.1.2 — Implement a compliance and enforcement program.</p>

ACTION	Time-Frame (years)	Implementation Milestones	Lead Agency	Alignment with Animal Welfare and Management Strategy (AWMS)
STRATEGY 3: REDUCE NUMBER OF SEMI-OWNED AND UNOWNED DOMESTIC CATS				
Action 7 Provide information to the community to increase awareness about the environmental and welfare implications of abandonment and feeding wandering cats.	3-5	Community education campaigns (refer Action 1) incorporate messages regarding semi-owned and un-owned cats, such as: ^{1,2,3} » ‘what can happen if you abandon your cat’ » ‘Don’t feed cats you do not own’.	TCCS (animal welfare) EPSDD (impacts to wildlife)	Outcome: 4.1 — Responsible pet ownership is promoted to manage the impact of domestic species on the environment and community.
Action 8 Work with animal care and rescue organisations to manage semi-owned and unowned cats in public places, through trap, de-sex and adopt activities.	3-5	Consult with non-government organisations and community on management of semi-owned and unowned cats in public places. ^{1,2}	TCCS	Action: 2.1.3 — Identify opportunities, in collaboration with relevant ACT Government agencies, to educate the community on best practice welfare. Opportunities should be targeted towards trends and high-risk issues.
STRATEGY 4: CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE DOMESTIC CAT WELFARE AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES				
Action 9 Develop and adopt model Codes of Practice (CoPs) and Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) for the humane treatment of domestic cats, including under the <i>Animal Welfare Act 1992</i> .	1-2	Review of CoPs and implement. ¹ » in consultation with the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC) Review of SOPs and implement. ^{1,2}	DAS AWAC	Outcome: 1.2 — ACT regulatory framework facilitates positive animal welfare and management practices and encourages improvements in animal welfare outcomes. Action: 1.2.3 — Develop mechanisms for periodic review of codes of practice and standard operating procedures to reflect best practice animal welfare and management outcomes.
Action 10 Review and implement CoPs, SoPs and MOUs/ agreements with external service providers for the operation of cat management facilities.	1-10	Regularly review service requirements and funding arrangements with animal welfare and service providers. ^{1,2}	TCCS1	Outcome: 3.2 — Service partners are able to fulfil their agreed roles efficiently and effectively. Action: 3.2.3 — Review reporting arrangements with service partners to ensure Government is able to efficiently and effectively report on animal welfare and management outcomes in the ACT and expenditure of public funds.
Action 11 Provide access to appropriate training and education to practitioners responsible for implementing domestic cat management to improve welfare outcomes for cats.	1-2	Requirements included in contracts and service agreements. ^{1,2} Rangers and other ACT Government staff adequately informed of and trained in animal welfare aspects. ^{1,2}	TCCS1 EPSDD	Outcome: 2.1 — Custodians, animal industries and the community have the information, knowledge and skills to fulfil their animal welfare and management responsibilities. Action: 2.1.2 — Implement mandatory training on appropriate animal handling and management techniques to improve animal welfare outcomes, including demonstrated ongoing education for authorised officers, ACT Government service providers and authorised carers. Outcome: 5.1 — Custodians, animal industries and the community are aware of and comply with their legal responsibilities.

ACTION	Time-Frame (years)	Implementation Milestones	Lead Agency	Alignment with Animal Welfare and Management Strategy (AWMS)
Action 12 Facilitate provision of adequate cat management facilities/shelters in the ACT to support: finding lost cats; adoption and re-homing; and compliance and enforcement.	3-5	Review adequacy of facilities and identify options for meeting future needs. ^{1, 2, 3, 4}	TCCS	<p>Action: 1.2.2 — Review the commercial and industrial areas development tables and/or codes of the Territory Plan to allow animal care facilities as a permitted use.</p> <p>Outcome: 3.1 — ACT Government is able to fulfil its animal welfare and management responsibilities efficiently and effectively.</p> <p>Action: 3.1.6 — Additional investment in fit for purpose facilities to care for and manage domestic animals in the custodianship of the ACT Government. Facilities should cater for current and future demand.</p> <p>Action: 5.2.2 — Additional investment in facilities and processes to support proportional and transparent compliance and enforcement activities.</p>

STRATEGY 5: EXPAND CAT CONTAINMENT

Action 13 Encourage voluntary cat containment by providing information, education and awareness raising on ‘benefits to cats’, ‘benefits to wildlife’, ‘how a roaming cat can cause nuisance’ and ‘how to contain a cat’.	1-2	<p>Community education campaigns (refer Action 1) incorporate messages to encourage uptake of voluntary cat containment, including¹:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Benefits to cats including cat health and longevity. » Benefits to wildlife. » ‘How to contain your cat’ 	TCCS	<p>Action: 2.1.1 — Undertake a community education campaign to promote and influence public understanding and opinions on their animal welfare and management responsibilities.</p> <p>Action: 4.1.3 — Investigate feasibility and options for expanding cat containment areas in new and existing urban areas of the ACT.</p>
Action 14 Continue to declare all new suburbs as cat containment.	ongoing	<p>Require all newly established suburbs to be cat containment areas prior to development.</p> <p>Declare all new suburbs as cat containment under the <i>Domestic Animals Act 2000</i>.</p>	TCCS	<p>Action: 4.1.3 — Investigate feasibility and options for expanding cat containment areas in new and existing urban areas of the ACT.</p>
Action 15 Introduce city-wide cat containment requirements for new cats acquired after a date declared by the government, with grandfathering arrangements for all cats owned before this date. Review and amend the <i>Domestic Animals Act 2000</i> to support this expansion of cat containment.	5 (1-2 consult)	<p>Declare suburbs cat containment under the <i>Domestic Animals Act 2000</i>.</p> <p>Identify older suburbs that are high risk and will be declared cat containment. (EPSDD)</p> <p>Undertake public consultation prior and post changes.</p> <p>Develop options for introduction of containment in consultation with expert advisory group/s.¹</p>	TCCS EPSDD	<p>Action: 4.1.3 — Investigate feasibility and options for expanding cat containment areas in new and existing urban areas of the ACT.</p>

ACTION	Time-Frame (years)	Implementation Milestones	Lead Agency	Alignment with Animal Welfare and Management Strategy (AWMS)
Action 16 Bring forward legislation to ensure that cats may be walked on a lead and harness lawfully in all suburbs, including in containment areas.	1	Review and amend <i>Domestic Animals Act 2000</i> to update provisions for containment ¹ » 'premises'/area to which a cat is to be contained » conditions e.g. 'on leash'.	TCCS	As above.
STRATEGY 6: REDUCED IMPACTS OF FERAL CATS				
Action 17 Educate people about the impacts of cats on Australian wildlife.	1-2	Undertake an education campaign to improve understanding of impacts of roaming and feral cats and how impacts to wildlife can be reduced through responsible pet ownership.	EPSDD	Action: 2.1.1 – Undertake a community education campaign to promote and influence public understanding and opinions on their animal welfare and management responsibilities.
Action 18 Support implementation of the Australian Government Threat Abatement Plan for Predation by Feral Cats 2015 and assess any nomination of predation by feral cats as a Key Threatening Process under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 2014</i> and, subject to listing, prepare an ACT Action Plan for Feral Cats.	1-2	ACT Government to assess any nomination received. ¹ ACT Scientific Committee to assess, undertake public consultation and make recommendation to Minister for Environment on listing feral cats as a key threatening process. ¹ Undertake public consultation on draft plan. ¹ Finalisation of Plan. ¹	EPSDD1	Objective 4: Where animals are managed for social, economic and environmental purposes, this happens in accordance with best practice. Action: 4.2 – Populations of pest species are managed in a humane and ethical manner.
Action 19 Participate in regional and national research and trials to: » improve monitoring and understanding of cat impacts, including risks to native wildlife » improve efficacy and expand available feral cat control methods.	3-5	Participate in collaborative research including: » with the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre (IACRC) ¹ » to evaluate potential new control methods. ^{1,2}	EPSDD	As above.
Action 20 Undertake feral cat control where feasible, cost-effective and provides highest conservation benefit from pest animal management.	6-10	Undertake feral cat control where cost effective. ^{1,2,3}	EPSDD	Action: 4.2.2 – Continue to undertake animal welfare and management practices for the management of pest species in accordance with the relevant national model code of practice for the humane control of feral animals. Where a national code does not exist, adopt or develop another code or procedure recognised as best practice.
Action 21 Increase cat-free conservation areas by expanding predator-proof fences in nature reserves.	1-2	Increase the size of the fenced predator-free environment for listed threatened species in partnership with the Woodlands Wetlands Trust. ¹	EPSDD	

ACTION	Time-Frame (years)	Implementation Milestones	Lead Agency	Alignment with Animal Welfare and Management Strategy (AWMS)
STRATEGY 7: ENGAGE RURAL LANDHOLDERS IN IMPROVED CAT MANAGEMENT				
Action 22 Undertake awareness raising and training of rural landholders regarding cat management on rural properties, including: » responsible cat ownership » impacts of cats on agriculture and methods for limiting transmission of parasites and disease to livestock » pest control methods including feral cats and vermin (rats and mice).	3-5	Consult with rural landholders on how they currently care for and manage cats on their properties. ¹ Develop material and engage with rural landholders, including training on implementing improved cat management on their properties. ^{1,2}	EPSDD	Action: 2.1.1 — Undertake a community education campaign to promote and influence public understanding and opinions on their animal welfare and management responsibilities. Action: 2.1.3 — Identify opportunities, in collaboration with relevant ACT Government agencies, to educate the community on best practice welfare. Opportunities should be targeted towards trends and high-risk issues.
Action 23 Engage with rural landholders and animal care and rescue organisations on managing wandering domestic cats on rural properties.	6-10	Explore opportunities for supporting rural landholders to improve management of semi-owned and un-owned cats in rural areas. ^{1,2}	EPSDD	
Action 24 Consider options for expanding cat containment to rural areas in consultation with rural communities.	6-10	Consider appropriateness of cat containment in rural areas (in association with Strategy 5 – Expand cat containment)	TCCS	
Action 25 Work with rural landholders to reduce the impact of feral cats on the environment.	6-10	Consult with rural landholders in management of Feral Cats, including development of Action Plan for Feral Cats. ¹	EPSDD	
STRATEGY 8: PROMOTE HUMAN HEALTH AND WELLBEING THROUGH RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP				
Action 26 Recognise and promote the health and wellbeing benefits associated with responsible pet ownership.	1-2	As above, incorporate information about the health benefits of pet ownership, including benefits to mental health, into information related to responsible pet ownership developed under Action 1. ¹	TCCS EPSDD ACT Health	As above
Action 27 Raise public awareness about how to reduce risk of infection from cats.	1-2	Incorporate in community education campaigns (see also Action 1.1) ^{1,2} , information related to human health such as: » health risks for pregnant woman. » Health issues for immunity compromised individuals such as the sick and elderly. » Increase knowledge about methods to reduce risks such as covering sand pits and cleaning cat litter with gloves.	ACT Health EPSDD	Action: 2.1.1 — Undertake a community education campaign to promote and influence public understanding and opinions on their animal welfare and management responsibilities. Action: 2.1.3 — Identify opportunities, in collaboration with relevant ACT Government agencies, to educate the community on best practice welfare. Opportunities should be targeted towards trends and high-risk issues.

