

29 July 2019

Enquiries: [REDACTED], [REDACTED]
Our Reference: Dog & Cat Act review

Cat and Dog statutory review
Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries
PO Box 8349
Perth Business Centre WA 6849

REVIEW OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S CAT ACT

The purpose of this correspondence is to provide recommendations pertaining to the review of the **Cat Act 2011** (Cat Act).

Background

The South West Group, formed in November 1983, is a Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils. It comprises the Cities of Cockburn, Fremantle, Kwinana, Melville, and Rockingham, and the Town of East Fremantle. The South West Group is managed by a Board consisting of the Mayors and CEOs of its member local governments.

The South West Group seeks to work with these six local governments and through cooperation with industry, community and the other spheres of government to capture a wide range of opportunities to enhance economic growth as well as supporting a diversity of quality lifestyles whilst servicing and sustaining cohesive, productive communities in an enviable environmental setting.

The South West Group's Submission

The South West Group member local governments are each submitting detailed responses to this review that reflect the views of the relevant local government.

This South West Group submission deals only with high level recommendations supported by all South West Group member local governments.

State versus local laws

It would be preferable for all regulations pertaining to cat containment to be uniformly applied at a state level so as to minimise or eliminate variations between local governments, but in the absence of this, local laws currently provide the only mechanism for local governments to impose regulations that require cat owners to contain their cats within their property boundaries.

Regulating Free Roaming Cats

Free roaming cats, both registered and stray, are a serious threat to native fauna and are a common cause of nuisance cat complaints.

While the Cat Act provides for local governments to create local laws to specify places where cats are prohibited absolutely, to impose curfews and to specify areas in which a portion of the premises on which a cat is kept must be enclosed in a manner capable of confining cats, with the exception of specifying places where cats are prohibited, the Act does not have sufficient power to enable local governments to implement these actions effectively.

Recommendation 1: The Cat Act and its supporting regulations should be strengthened to enable those local governments that wish to, to implement effective local cat containment laws.

The Cat Act does not currently enable a local government to implement a local law regulating cat containment across its entire jurisdiction. Wherever regulations are applicable to only part of a local government's jurisdiction, this:

- Creates confusion and can cause feelings of inequality between residents
- Introduces additional complexities for the local government administering the regulations

Recommendation 2: The Cat Act and its supporting regulations should be amended to enable those local governments that wish to, to implement local cat containment laws across their entire jurisdiction.

Yours sincerely

