



about ... Cat Management

Cats have so much to offer – they provide companionship, affection and entertainment; and if looked after properly are economical, clean and easy to care for.

However, the decision to own a cat is an important one and one that comes with a level of responsibility. Cats can be loathed pests to people if they are not well managed. They can cause nuisance by wandering, cause dogs to bark, spraying their "scent", digging and defecating in garden beds, destroy native birds and animals, as well as fighting other cats / animals at night. Domestic cats can also lead to increases in the feral cat population.

Responsible cat ownership is critical to ensure that cats continue to be a loyal companion to their owners and a pleasant pet for adjacent and nearby property owners to live with.

It is not a requirement to register your cat, however this information sheet provides all you need to know about responsible cat ownership in the Rural City of Murray Bridge, as well as advice about rights and responsibilities when it comes to nuisance cats in your neighbourhood.

What are my responsibilities?

- Identify your cat with a collar containing your current contact details and consider getting your cat microchipped (a requirement after 1 July 2018). This may save your cat's life, avoid it being kept by a member of the public or being classified as a stray. Remember collars can be removed / lost;
- To reduce unwanted litters please consider desexing your cat. This may also assist with the longevity of your cat;
- Keep your cat inside at night to reduce the incidence of transmittable and incurable diseases, cat fights, road accidents and the killing of local wildlife; and
- Confining your cat to your own property protects wildlife and avoids neighbourly disputes. Consider building a cat run or enclosure to contain your cat.

Is it a requirement to desex my cat and what are the benefits if I have my cat desexed?

It is currently not a mandatory requirement to have your cat desexed, but this will change on 1 July 2018. However, to reduce wandering and unwanted litters we strongly recommend desexing.

Benefits of desexing

Health Benefits

- Females can suffer from physical and nutritional exhaustion if continually breeding;
- Reduced risk of birthing complications, abscesses and dystocia; and
- Eliminates "heat" cycles in female cats and their efforts to get outside in search of a mate.

Behavioural Benefits

- Pets are less prone to wander, fight, and are less likely to get lost or injured;
- Reduces territorial behavior such as "spraying" indoors; and
- Less likely to suffer from anti-social behaviours. Cats become more affectionate and become better companions.



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Should I have my cat microchipped?

We encourage owners to have their cats microchipped. As of 1 July 2018 (under updated legislation) it will be a requirement to do so. Microchipping is the only permanent means of identification and when combined with a collar, this identification may save the life of your cat and may avoid it being kept by a member of the public or being classified as a stray.

It is a requirement under the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* to release any trapped cats which have identification such as a collar or a microchip tattoo.

What can I do if I'm no longer able to keep my cat?

If you as the cat owner can no longer look after your pet, it can be taken to the Animal Welfare League (<https://www.awla.com.au/the-awla-team/south-australia/>).

Please be aware that the relinquishment of ownership results in the Animal Welfare League having ownership of the cat and therefore being able to make decisions in relation to its rehoming.

What can I do about stray and nuisance cats?

If known owned cats are causing a nuisance to your property we encourage you to approach the cat owner in a friendly manner and explain what impact their cat may be having on your property. The Council's Compliance Officers can support you by providing advice and information on how you might approach this with the neighbour.

For stray and nuisance cats we provide cat traps. Traps are available for hire from customer service at the Local Government Centre (2 Seventh Street, Murray Bridge). The cost of a hiring a trap is \$5 per week with a \$50 bond refunded upon return of the trap or via EFT.

If an identified cat is trapped it must be released as required under the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*. If an unidentified cat is trapped, it may be released or it may be delivered to the Animal Welfare League or a local veterinarian who will make a decision as to whether the cat should be rehomed or euthanased humanely.

Trapped cats must not be kept in cages in inclement weather conditions, for any period of time without water and shelter. To do so constitutes an act of animal cruelty under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animal Act 1985*. For reports of animal cruelty please contact the RSPCA on 1300 477 722.

For more information on cat management please contact Council's Compliance Officers on (08) 8539 1472 or council@murraybridge.sa.gov.au.



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