**KEY POINTS**

Cat management policy needs to be evidence-based to be effective.

1. This Review does not provide any evidence or science to support mandated cat containment - so what is this consideration based on?

2. mandated cat containment leads to increased cat nuisance complaints, increased cat impoundments, increased cat and kitten euthanasia, increased costs and enforcement difficulties for local governments, increased mental health damage to veterinary staff and community residents caused by euthanasing healthy cats and kittens and no reduction in the overall number of wandering cats.

3. Containment causes severe psychological damage to staff having to repeatedly kill healthy cats and kittens (and more will be killed if mandated cat containment introduced) – impacts are well-documented and include depression, trauma, substance abuse and increased risk of suicide. Also severe psychological impacts on community residents when the stray cats they have been feeding – and have a strong bond with – are killed (see Stockton Breakwall Newcastle cat cull).

4. Evidence shows that Trapping and killing wandering stray cats will not reduce wandering cat numbers as the population quickly replenishes to original level - this has been the typical approach by councils for decades and it is a proven failure, just like mandated cat containment.

5. Mandated cat containment has been proven to be an ineffective strategy; a failure at reducing wandering cats in the short and long term, both in Australia and internationally – for e.g. Casey and Yarra Ranges in Australia and for e.g. USA jurisdictions in Virginia, LA, Washington.

6. Australian councils – Hume and Hobsons bay have rejected mandated cat containment as they accurately assessed it as being unenforceable and that it would not protect wildlife or reduce wandering cats. Merri-bek council recently rejected mandated cat containment in favour of targeted desexing programs.

7. NSW government rehoming review (2022) did not recommend mandated cat containment as a strategy to reduce euthanasia or increase rehoming of cats.

8. Why is the Review considering a strategy that has already been shown to be a failure t reducing wandering cats??

9. RSPCA Australia 218 states that: “Overall, councils with cat containment regulations have not been able to demonstrate any

measurable reduction in cat complaints or cats wandering at large following the introduction of the regulations”.

10. Mandated cat containment is not an effective strategy to reduce wandering cats because most wandering cats are strays with no owner to contain them. Even for cats with an owner, containment is often not achievable due to factors such as housing limitations (e.g. rentals), lack of financial resources and concerns about the welfare of confined cats.

11. Mandated cat containment actively prevents the resolution of the problem of wandering cats because it presents a huge barrier to cat semi-owners taking full ownership of the stray cat they are feeding.

12. Mandated cat containment criminalises cat ownership for disadvantaged families, and is a barrier to semi-owners adopting cats they are feeding. The Review doesn’t even mention semi-owners feeding stray cats and yet they are the KEY to resolving the wandering cat issue!!

13. Further consultation including a full review and assessment of the evidence MUST occur to ensure mandated cat containment is rejected.

14. What is effective? An approach, scientifically proven to be very effective at reducing wandering cats, is to help people with the desexing of their semi-owned stray cats, by significantly reducing the number of unwanted kittens born, such programs, not mandated containment, are the key solution to the problem of wandering cats and the associated issues such as nuisance complaints, costs to local governments and potential wildlife predation.