



Snip it in the Bud!

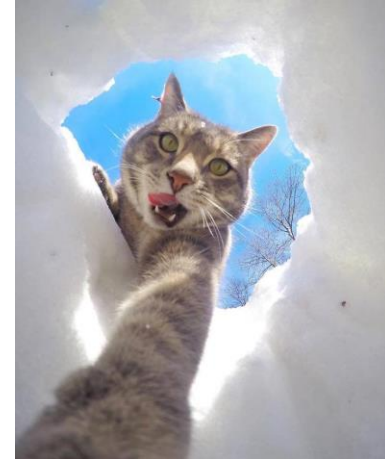
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Initial Problems

- Overpopulation and Euthanasia- too many cats
- AVA Desexing vouchers- not utilised
- Low Socioeconomic areas- residents with no money or no transport





Initial Problems

- **Lack of holding capacity in the pound** – number of strays Vs homes
- **Officer time spent-** cat trapping, collecting and complaints a standard practice across Victoria
- **Emotional Impact-** AMO's picking up cats, shelter staff looking after animals, vets who have to euthanise animals and residents (no free hoarding support for mental illness)
- **Council reputation-** been seen as killers, revenue raisers, easy disposal for cats/ kittens, are we glorified cat killing cabs
- **Relationships in the Community-** will residents have confidence to be completely honest with us being enforcement officers?



One kitten





Cat Management Options



- Continue to accept strays and provide cat traps for residents?- returning to the same properties each year for kitten pickups
- Lethal Control- Municipalities pay for this through pound services
- Mandatory de sexing V's affordable de sexing v's free de sexing
- Does Council's invest on promoting full ownership, with de sexing, permanent ID and registration for these cats?



The Start!

- **New dog pound contract with RSPCA-** we spoke of our cat problem and our wish to try and help Banyule cats.
- **Our Wish list:**
 - Free desexing for cats in our municipality
 - Free microchipping as well
 - Desexing done in the council area so residents didn't have to drive or find transport
- **\$7,000 in the budget-** this had not been utilised for the AVA Vouchers Scheme



And so.. desexing started

- Targeted door knocks around our problem areas- the low socio economic areas were dropped flyers in the West Heidelberg and Heidelberg Heights areas.
- “Mac” the RSPCA mobile animal care unit - parked at our depot with a full compliment of staff
- The AMO’s ran a courtesy bus for pick up and drop off- to and from the mobile clinic



How it works



- **Advertising**
- **Customer Service-** email me the information of details of owner, number of cats and contact details
- **Animal Management** – I call them back get further details of cat/ cats eg sex, breed, colour, age and name of cat, where they obtained them
- **Data Inputted** - emailed to vet
- **Vet-** book cats in to suit their schedules

Problem areas



- **Heidelberg West, Heidelberg Heights and Bellfield**
- **Greater Area-** social housing and lower income young families
- **Greater complaints-** these 3 smaller suburbs
- **Intake** – 4 x greater in Heidelberg West than any other suburb of Banyule



Outcomes of the RSPCA program



- **Mobile Clinic-** after hours emergencies for cats with issues after surgery v's local Vet practises
- **Time Constraints-** females had to be desexed first thing in the morning, for greater recovery time
- **Logistics of Courtesy Bus-**
 - Officer time and still had day to day duties/ complaints
 - 12 hour days
 - Removal of stiches from females



Further Outcomes

- The Statistics- targeting problem areas is more successful
- Legislation- focus on de sexing and overpopulation v's registration, confinement and imposing further legislation (hard to prove ownership and compliance hard to achieve already)
- Private vet clinics/ organization agreements- team up with pound providers/ clinics and see what they can offer, making sure after hours care is part of this.
- Semi Owned cats/ kittens- this program is about residents calling me stating they own a cat they want to get their cat desexed

Current Situation



- 891 cats/ kittens de sexed to date
- Program runs all year- 1 officer
- Each cat is de sexed, microchipped and registered (until the next renewal period).
- All cats participating in this program are now fully owned- increasing the ownership responsibility and greater chance to reunite
- Total spend \$67,000

Banyule City Council Impound Statistics 2012-2021

* Cat Protection Society Intake Records



Year	Impoundment			Outcomes			Number of cats desexed
	Cats	Kittens	Total	Euthanased	Reclaimed	Adopted	
2012-2013	311	85	396	138	23	235	40
2013-2014	298	61	359	84	24	251	40
2014-2015	319	162	481	87	37	357	120
2015-2016	393	94	487	82	65	340	138
2016-2017	224	60	284	102	51	131	130
2017-2018	233	41	274	66	38	170	177
2018-2019	176	41	217	41	24	152	60
2019-2020	119	33	152	24	30	98	75
2020-2021	113	21	134	25	1	88	111



Learnings

- Promotion is a key essential- the better initial promotion the easier it will be to continue your program.
- You need to spend money to save money/ time in the long run
- Target your known cat problem areas first
- Data collection is a key essential- all data including how a resident obtained their cat/kitten
- De sex all cats/ kittens at a property
- Utilise other organisations within the community eg Community Centres
- Even with reduced rate de sexing programs residents were only getting cats de sexed because it was completely free.



Challenges for AMO's

- Companion animals are they a priority with your Council?
- Funding for programs
- Is there a lack of understanding from Management of your role and day to day work?
- How do we raise awareness within our own Council's of the issues of cat management?

Other Important Links



- **Domestic Animal Management Plan**
 - Signed off by Council
 - Ongoing commitment for funding for the desexing program
- **Know Your Council**
 - Local Government Reporting on reclaim rates
 - Working in partnership with the pound to increase reclaim and reduce intakes
- **Link in with the Biodiversity Plan and programs within Council**



Questions?

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