

Hi All,

**Attached Are the Guidelines for Capture and trapping of cats which have been put together by the RSPCA.**

Please note that this is **RSPCA's original working draft**. They are looking for comment at the next meeting which is on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2013.

**(This meeting will be attended by representatives from your Committee)**

RSPCA is also looking at dividing the document in two; one for LG Staff and the other for members of the public.

Please note that this document also refers to;

*"Trapping should be used as a last resort, as it is very stressful experience for a cat. Personal handling may be able to be used for some domestic cats who are well socialised. Anyone setting a trap should be confident and competent, and should have attended training on trapping of cats. No untrained members of the public should attempt trapping of a cat, and traps should not be available for hire to the public."*

At the last meeting this was discussed as Local Governments do not have the resources or budget to trap cats, most local governments will be probably trapping on LG land, but will be hiring traps out to members of the public.

**If you could make comment to [admin@warangers.asn.au](mailto:admin@warangers.asn.au) prior to Monday 26 August 2013 that would be greatly appreciated.**

Cheers,  
Sharna

*Regards*

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## Guidelines for Live Capture and Trapping of Cats

Before carrying out a trapping program a person must read and understand the relevant provisions in Section 19 of the Animal Welfare Act 2002 Act as listed below

### 19. Cruelty to animals

(1) A person must not be cruel to an animal.

Penalty: Minimum — \$2 000.

Maximum — \$50 000 and imprisonment for 5 years.

(2) Without limiting subsection (1) a person, whether or not the person is a person in charge of the animal, is cruel to an animal if the person —

- (a) tortures, mutilates, maliciously beats or wounds, abuses, torments, or otherwise ill-treats, the animal;
- (b) uses a prescribed inhumane device on the animal;
- (c) intentionally or recklessly poisons the animal;
- (d) does any prescribed act to, or in relation to, the animal;
- or
- (e) in any other way causes the animal unnecessary harm.

(3) Without limiting subsection (1) a person in charge of an animal is cruel to an animal if the animal —

- (a) is transported in a way that causes, or is likely to cause, it unnecessary harm;
- (b) is confined, restrained or caught in a manner that —
  - (i) is prescribed; or
  - (ii) causes, or is likely to cause, it unnecessary harm;
- (c) is worked, driven, ridden or otherwise used —
  - (i) when it is not fit to be so used or has been over used; or
  - (ii) in a manner that causes, or is likely to cause, it unnecessary harm;
- (d) is not provided with proper and sufficient food or water
- (e) is not provided with such shelter, shade or other protection from the elements as is reasonably necessary to ensure its welfare, safety and health;
- (f) is abandoned, whether at the place where it is normally kept or elsewhere;
- (g) is subjected to a prescribed surgical or similar operation, practice or activity;
- (h) suffers harm which could be alleviated by the taking of reasonable steps;
  - (i) suffers harm as a result of a prescribed act being carried out on, or in relation to, it; or
  - (j) is, in any other way, caused unnecessary harm.

## **The Five Freedoms**

From a welfare point of view all trapping procedures should be conducted within the realms of four of the five freedoms of animal welfare.

- Freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition –*traps must be checked regularly as specified especially if the weather is hot*
- Freedom from discomfort – *traps must provide reasonable shelter from temperature extremes if the trap is not checked within two hours*
- Freedom from pain, injury and disease – *traps in poor condition or with protrusions that may cause injury, and disease transfer must not be used*
- Freedom to express normal behaviour - *by providing a trap of sufficient size for the animal to lie down on bedding*
- Freedom from fear and distress –*ensure all reasonable measures are taken to reduce stress levels while in the trap*

## **Reasons for Trapping**

- Feral Cats

A feral cat is defined as a cat which does not have significant contact with humans and does not have human socialisation. It does not include stray or abandoned cats. Feral cat control programs are carried out where known populations of feral cats are impacting on surrounding human populations, or are impacting on wildlife. The purpose of trapping is to euthanase the animals, and trapping may be done by Local Government Rangers, State Government employees or contractors.

- Domestic cats

Domestic cats are defined as those which live within a household. Aligned to this category are community cats who are not owned by a single person, but are fed by a number of people in a particular area. With the introduction of the Cat Act 2011 there is a requirement for all cats to be microchipped, registered with Local Government and sterilised unless they belong to a registered breeder. Local Government Rangers will be responsible for capturing domestic cats in public areas or on a person's property without consent. The purpose of trapping is to identify the owner of the cat if possible, and if not possible to rehome or euthanase the cat.

## **Other Forms of Capture**

Trapping should be used as a last resort, as it is a very stressful experience for a cat. Personal handling may be able to be used for some domestic cats who are well socialised. Anyone setting a trap should be confident and competent, and should have attended training on trapping of cats. No untrained members of the public should attempt trapping of a cat, and traps should not be available for hire to the public.

## **Before Setting Traps**

- Ensure that you have permission to trap in an area from the owner of the land and from the Local Government
- Leaflet drop to local residents to inform them of trapping in area, ask them to keep their cats indoors and instructing that they not interfere with traps.
- If a particular cat is hard to trap provide feed and an unset trap in the proposed location for several days prior to setting the trap
- If possible assess the general health, wellbeing and number of cats that require trapping and whether there are any lactating females and kittens.
- If trapping in remote areas, try to choose the time of year when food availability is low, to allow for the greatest attraction to the food in traps

## **Trapping**

Only cage pedal traps are recommended for trapping of cats, as hook traps are more likely to cause unnecessary harm to the animal and will contravene the Animal Welfare Act 2002. Always check that traps work correctly before reaching the trap site. The trap should be pegged to the grounds so that it cannot be easily moved. **Size of trap??**

### **Additional equipment which may be required**

- Food lures such as tuna, mackerel or sardines in oil
- cat pheromone rags (eg sprayed with Feliway) may also assist in attracting cats to the trap
- Newspaper to line the bottom of the trap.
- Bedding
- A large towel or blanket to cover each trap, this must be large enough to fully cover the trap on all sides and will need to be water proof during times of rain.
- Flashlight for checking traps at night or early morning.
- PPE, Hand sanitiser and gloves.
- Suitable tools for sedation and euthanasia if authorised
- If it is suspected that kittens may also be recovered from the site, also bring cardboard boxes and fleeces

### **Preparing traps**

- Prepare the traps near your vehicle to reduce disturbance
- Place the traps on a flat surface to ensure stability
- Secure the door of the trap open to enable placement of newspaper and food inside.
- Place food at the very back of the trap.

### **Placement of Traps**

- Record location date and time of placement of traps, and if working in remote locations ensure accurate GPS tracking of every trap
- Do not locate traps in rural areas where stock are likely to pass through
- A suitable site must be chosen for the trap which provides shade and shelter from the weather
- Do not place traps on days with extreme weather conditions
- Cover the back half of the cage with a blanket or towel as coverage often increases the cats' sense of security making them more likely to enter the trap.

### **Management of Traps**

- Traps must be set at night wherever possible and must be checked within 2 hours of sunrise.
- If traps are left during the day they must be checked every 2 hours.
- Try to check traps from a distance if possible to avoid scaring cats away.

### **Management of Trapped Cat in a Feral Cat Control Program**

- the cat should be euthanased as quickly as possible, however cats must be checked for signs of ownership including checking for tattoos, males who are desexed, signs of a collar or microchipping.
- Lactating queens should be released immediately unless kittens are accessible.

### **Management of Trapped Cat in a Domestic Situation**

- An initial check of the cat must be done to assess its general health and condition, and identify any signs of ownership such as tattoos, a collar or evidence around the neck that a collar has been worn.
- Should a cat appear sick or injured it should immediately be taken to a veterinary surgery  
Lactating queens should be released immediately unless kittens are accessible.
- Once a cat has been assessed the trap should be fully covered with the blanket and immediately transported to the appropriate place for further checks including scanning for a microchip
- Vehicles used for transport should be enclosed, allow for airflow and have suitable temperature control, and animals should be transported without stopping and offloaded immediately on arrival at the final location.
- Under no circumstances cats from different areas be transported in the same vehicle
- All traps and vehicles should be thoroughly disinfected with appropriate products before reuse to prevent transmission of all contagious cat diseases.

## Euthanasia

Where cats are to be euthanized it must be undertaken by a competent person who is competent and confident in the procedure. The preferred form of euthanasia in the field is two step euthanasia unless a vet is available to carry out other procedures. The cat should first be rendered unconscious by tipping the cage and injecting Zoletil (are there other products suitable?). To use Zoletil an operator must be authorised for its use under the Vet Surgeons Act, trained in its use in a course approved by the Vet Surgeons Board and be competent and confident, as well as obtaining a Poisons Permit from Dept of Health(?)

Once the cat is unconscious (5-10 mins) (how is it determined that the cat is unconscious?), the second stage of euthanasia may be done in a variety of ways, but must follow a standard as described below. Methods may include ;

- **captive bolt**  
training? Must be held against the head
- **lethal injection ie overdose of a recognised anaesthetic or analgesic agent (eg Lethabarb)**  
To use lethabarb an operator must be authorised under the Vet Surgeons Act. and trained in the lethabarb in a course approved by the Vet Surgeons Board, be competent and confident, as well as obtaining a Poisons Permit from Dept of Health(?)
- **CO2**  
Training, methods?
- **Firearm**  
Single shot to the head

The only other humane form of euthanasia in the field other than 2 step euthanasia is the use of firearms by killing the cat with a single shot to the head. The operator must meet the requirements set by WAPOL and the Firearm Act and have permission to shoot in the area. All people present should be moved away from the trap. The operator should wait until the cat is motionless, and the range for a firearm should be 5-20cm from the head before a shot is fired.

## Evidence of death

A person who euthanizes a cat must take reasonable steps to ensure that the animal is dead before leaving the animal or taking any further action with the animal.

To determine whether the animal is dead, all three of the following signs must be observed:

- absence of rhythmic respiratory movements
- absence of corneal 'blink' reflex when the eyeball is touched
- absence of a pulse