

**GR5 – Wildlife Protection Policy**

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**Wildlife Protection Policy**

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TRIM 10586

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- The purpose of this report is to prepare a Policy in regards to Wildlife Protection.
- It is recommended that:
  - Council support the exhibition of the Draft Wildlife Protection Policy.
  - That two trial sites - Scotchies Reserve, Silverdale and Lyn Gordon Reserve, Thirlmere be proposed as Category 2 land and monitored in accordance with the Draft Policy which will prohibit cats as per S.30 c.1(b) of the NSW Companion Animals Act 1998.
  - Upon endorsement by Council, the proposal shall be publically exhibited for a minimum of 28 days including written notification to adjoining landowners and the use of a 'Monkey Survey' to gauge residents' opinions.
  - Following completion of the exhibition period, a report on submissions received and a recommendation to proceed with a declaration or otherwise will be prepared for Council's consideration.
  - If a Wildlife Protection Area is to be established in these locations, that Council erect conspicuous signage which provides notification of the Wildlife Protection Area.
  - That the proposed Education and Information Program be adopted.

**REPORT**

On the 15 May 2017, Council considered a report in response to a Notice of Motion relating to the protection of wildlife and resolved:

1. *That Council consider whether it should establish Wildlife Protection Areas within Threatened Ecological (vegetation and fauna) communities. If so, that a further report to be submitted to Council with recommendations as to areas to be established.*
2. *That a Public Education and Information Program Be established for Responsible Cat Ownership and a Responsible Cat Car Brochure be published for the community, encouraging owners to keep their cats contained at night.*

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In the report of 15 May, it was advised that:

- The Companion Animals Act 1998 provides no legal notion of a stray cat, therefore there is no offence in a cat straying and no requirement for cats to be kept inside
- Cats are prohibited in Wildlife Protection Areas. Wollondilly currently has no defined Wildlife Protection areas
- A number of NSW Councils were contacted with regards to cat laws. No other Council contacted has a night time cat curfew however a number such as Pittwater Council and Blue Mountains City Council have established Wildlife Protection Areas.

The purpose of this report is to respond to part 1 of the above mentioned resolution regarding the establishment of Wildlife Protection Areas. The detail of a public education program for responsible cat ownership is also addressed in this report.

Notably, in the 2016/2017 financial year 85 cats were impounded at Council's Animal Shelter. Of these, 26 cats were categorised as bon-a-fide 'feral' cats. The remainder of the cats impounded were largely rehomed, sold or returned to owners.

Currently Wollondilly has no Wildlife Protection Area established. Wildlife protection areas are usually established to prohibit domestic dogs and cats from being in Reserves that have wildlife. Wollondilly Shire has an abundance of native fauna that should be protected.

Wildlife Protection Areas can only be declared as one of two categories following a period of community consultation and exhibition of proposed areas:

- Category 1 lands will prohibit both cats and dogs as per S.30.c1(b) and S. 14c.1(h) of the NSW Companion Animals Act 1998;
- Category 2 lands will prohibit cats as per S.30 c.1(b) of the NSW Companion Animals Act, 1998. Dogs that are on a leash will be permitted on formed tracks, pathways or roads in Category 2 lands.

If domestic animals are found on a Reserve declared a Wildlife Protection Area, in contravention of the above categories, Council Rangers have powers to fine owners and impound animals. This allows for greater protection of native wildlife and in general greater education to the public for responsible pet ownership.

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One disadvantage is the additional impact to Council resources and potential expectation that Council will regularly patrol these areas. This is unlikely but the signage and declaration in conjunction with a policy will provide Council with greater powers in relation to cats and dogs in these reserves should it be deemed necessary to take impoundment action.

Note: The Wildlife Protection areas should be in dedicated reserves that do not conflict with off leash areas

Recommended List of Reserves for a trial:

- Scotchies Reserve, Silverdale
- Lyn Gordon Reserve, Thirlmere.

**CONSULTATION**

Internal consultation has occurred with Compliance staff and the Manager of Environmental Outcomes and has been briefly discussed at the Companion Animals Committee. The Draft Policy will be provided to this Committee and to the Minerals Energy Resources Environment and Waste Advisory Committees. Additionally it is proposed to exhibit the draft Policy for 28 Days.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

No funding has been allocated for this project/item and there is currently no education budget located within the Compliance Budget.

Estimated costs at this stage are:

- Signs, graphics and installation - \$1500
- Policy draft: within existing budgets
- Brochure: complete within existing budgets
- Brochure printing: could be done on the colour printer and targeted mail out to adjoining landowners
- Advertising of the draft policy \$500
- Cost of traps \$200
- Media release and public awareness through correspondence to adjoining owners and monkey survey: existing budgets
- Preparation of draft policy: prepared by staff - existing budgets.

As indicated above, the costs are not significant and apart from advertising, estimated to be approximately \$500, the remainder of approximately \$1700 will not be required until after the exhibition period. Adjustments to the September 2018/2019 quarterly review period will be required in the new financial year to cover these costs.

Sustainable and Balanced Growth  
Report to the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Monday 18 June 2018

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**ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED A SEPARATE BOOKLET**

1. Draft Wildlife Protection Policy
2. Education pamphlet
3. Cat Communication Strategy

**RECOMMENDATION**

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3. That upon endorsement by Council, the proposal shall be publically exhibited for a minimum of 28 days including written notification to adjoining landowners and the use of a 'Monkey Survey' to gauge residents' opinions.
4. That following completion of the exhibition period, a report on submissions received and a recommendation to proceed with a declaration or otherwise will be prepared for Council's consideration.
5. That if a Wildlife Protection Area is to be established in these locations, that Council erect conspicuous signage which provides notification of the Wildlife Protection Area.
6. That the proposed Education and Information Program be adopted.