

Response to Questions on Notice – Stephen Albin

Q1. Early Results of the AWL NSW Community Cat Management Pilot

Community Cat Management Pilot

AWL NSW is undertaking a Community Cat Management Pilot Program. The program has been designed with specific reference to Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, to ensure compliance with the Act.

Two pilot areas have been selected, Bega and Inverell. Inverell has commenced but is too early to provide any meaningful insights.

The purpose of the program is to conduct two pilots to identify the viability of building scale. The pilot program will be extensively evaluated following completion of the two projects.

AWL NSW has provided \$80,000 to undertake the two projects.

Both the projects are in their infancy and largely in set up phase. It would not be expected that any material immediate reduction in cat populations would be evident from either of these projects.

Some of the challenges the projects have faced to date are:

Veterinary - shortage of space in veterinary clinics (as they are doing the work at a discounted rate and only do the work when there are no full fee paying patients). We have expanded the number of vets in the program and will seek further expansion

Community engagement - after first commencing a pilot project at an aboriginal community, it became evident that the project would not have the number of animals to meet benchmarks. The project pivoted to also undertake work on a corporate waste management facility that was enclosed and cats could be owned.

Project Infrastructure – delivery and availability of traps along with some medical supplies have delayed start in one of the projects.

There have been no adverse health impacts on any animals treated under the program to date.

Program Progress

- **Desexing and Treatment:** 22 cats have been desexed, vaccinated, microchipped, and treated for ticks/fleas under the program to date.
- **Follow-up Results:** All follow-up checks on treated cats have been positive with

no reported problems.

- **Veterinary Partnerships:** Veterinary Partnerships have doubled over the period.

- **Site Partnership Agreements:** Management at the Bega site has identified approximately 15 cats and kittens on their property and agreed to take ownership. A nearby household has identified 5 additional cats. These animals will be trapped and ear-tipped (rather than tattooed) later this month.

- **Community Support:** Both Bega Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) and the local Wollongong University campus are actively supporting the project by helping distribute information about the program.

- **Information Hub:** The Bega Hub shopfront has proven to be a valuable community resource, with residents regularly visiting to obtain information and discuss cat care.

Next Steps

1. Veterinary Capacity Expansion - Primary Focus:

- Building on the successful onboarding of Merimbula vets, identify and engage additional veterinary clinics beyond Bega and Merimbula to directly address the critical veterinary bottleneck.
- Negotiate dedicated time slots for the program at all partner clinics and explore options for after-hours or weekend clinics specifically for community cats.

2. Site Intervention: Complete scheduled trapping, desexing, and ear tipping of the approximately 20 cats at the site and nearby household by end of May as a priority high-impact initiative.

3. Community Engagement Intensification:

- Continue the successful collaborations with local Aboriginal groups and University campus.
- Conduct additional targeted leaflet drops and door-knocking in areas with low participation.
- Develop culturally appropriate messaging around desexing for Indigenous communities.

4. Financial Documentation and Resource Optimisation:

- Follow up with Bega vets to obtain comprehensive invoice for services rendered to date to ensure accurate budget tracking.
- Evaluate spending patterns to identify potential savings that could be redirected toward securing additional veterinary services.

Q2. Microtargetting of Cat Populations.

As this is a community cat management program and must comply with POCTAA, animals must be owned and within a discrete privately owned community. Micro targeting of cat populations is not undertaken rather targeting of potential community partners with cat colony issues is the way the program is specified.