

INQUIRY INTO POUNDS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Our LGA, Fairfield council NSW, has had an ongoing stray cat problem for many years. In the past twenty years the number of free roaming cats has escalated enormously, particularly in the CBD and in areas of satellite shopping centres, fast food outlets et al.

In 2004/5 a colony began breeding in the immediate vicinity of our house. We were told it was due to undesexed cats being left by renters and before long there were thirty cats and kittens. Renters leaving cats behind is one of the major issues.

Since 2010, we and other groups were being confronted by the numbers arriving in pounds as displayed on social media. Scrambling to rescue cats from euthanasia was soul destroying so we began to target the street cats in the hope of diverting them from the pounds. And that is where we still are.

In 2019 we had an unofficial meeting with our Mayor. We had hope of being proactive with council combine with our association with AWL. We aimed at being able to collaborate to an extent but Covid happened and things stalled. We did not ask for funding from council. We continued to raise our own which became increasingly difficult as did the rescue and rehoming because after Covid things were much worse.

Our Mayor recently told a rescuer when she asked why he did not help that his hands were tied.

Pragmatism dictates that we cannot keep bringing cats in when we are full. We differ from the pounds in that we are a No Kill establishment and they are forced to kill for space. Our energy and finances obviously also influence those decisions.

Our main occupation now is networking with the rescue community, communicating with the many residents who ask for assistance, arranging low cost or free desexing.

We are fortunate to work with AWL who provides low cost vouchers.

Since the end of the contract with Sydney Dogs and Cats Home and Fairfield council there has not been a pound or shelter for our LGA. Cats are continuously dumped in the streets.

Much of our suburb is low socioeconomic. I continually field desperate pleas to take cats from people. I had a phone call recently from people on pensions who have thirty cats all undesexed and asking me to take half of them. I have emails from other proactive individuals losing the plot in trying to cope. Our charity tries very hard to support and assist those who are most vulnerable, i.e. the chronically sick, the 'unable to afford to feed' their rescues, cats we have desexed for them and which are on long waiting lists with major shelters. I am not a counsellor yet I am continually involved in trying to counsel others when in fact I need it myself.

My suggestions are as follows:

A high volume free desex/vaccinate, microchip and register would go a long way to mitigate the problems.

Targeted Trap, Neuter, Release programs for street and stray cats would reduce the free roaming cats that continuously cause nuisance reports to council AND rescue organisations.

A shelter of our own.