



NDN CO-OPERATIVE CAT DESEXING PROGRAM

Purpose

This targeted ongoing low cost desexing program to help residents in need prevents abandonment and euthanasia of cats, reduces numbers of wandering, unowned and feral cats, reduces Council costs of collecting, holding and euthanasing or rehoming unwanted cats, and supports breeder permit and desexing legislation and reduction in wildlife predation. This program has focussed on cats due to their faster breeding rate and higher intake and euthanasia rates of kittens and cats. However, it can also be developed to apply to dogs.

How it works

1. Councils fund an annual amount e.g. \$5 000 to \$50 000, to subsidise desexing costs for cat owners in need i.e.

- holders of pension, concession or health care cards
- people on low incomes
- people with large numbers of cats/dogs

Council funds used proactively in this way over a number of years, along with other G2Z strategies have been shown to reduce the number of abandoned cats and dogs in the community.

<http://www.g2z.org.au/pdf/Benefits%20of%20funding%20cooperative%20desexing%20programs%202016.pdf>

2. Costs are shared between owners, Council, animal welfare groups and veterinarians. Prices must be low enough to allow owners on a pension or low income to contribute, yet still cover veterinary costs.

CATS	Owner pays	Council Subsidy	Vet receives*
Male cat castration	\$35	\$55	\$90
Female cat spey	\$55 for first cat \$35 for additional cats	\$65 \$85	\$120

*This covers current veterinary costs of wages and materials plus GST. These prices are reviewed and adjusted over time as needed.

3. To ensure that low income earners can participate, the following consistent conditions across all participating vet clinics are required:

- 24 hour pain relief included at no extra cost
- No requirement to vaccinate before desexing. Vet clinics may choose to allocate a particular day for desexing and/or a section of the clinic if they are concerned about having unvaccinated animals in their clinic.
- If animals are **pregnant or in season**, owners are not to be asked for additional payment. Instead **vets can claim an additional standard rate of \$55 from the Council funding.**

4. The program runs all year round and must be heavily promoted once or twice a year, especially in low breeding season between June and September. This is to reduce the number of unwanted kittens and pregnant and in-season cats needing to be desexed.

5. Participating vets receive free promotion through various media, acknowledging their contribution to reducing the oversupply of cats in the city/shire. A Certificate of Appreciation is provided to display in the clinic as acknowledgement of this community service.

6. **Promotion, issuing of vouchers, and vet reimbursement is currently managed free of charge by AWLQ's National Desexing Network's (NDN) experienced team.**

7. **Procedure:**

- (i) Councils budget an annual amount for desexing subsidies and promotion
- (ii) Local vets are invited to participate
- (iii) A Community Awareness Campaign is conducted promoting the availability of desexing support for people in financial need, the participating vets, the benefits to cats, owners and the community, and the importance of desexing before 4 months of age. It is important to create a sense of urgency to encourage people to act. (Sample media release, advertisement and flyer available)
- (iv) The cat owner phones NDN, who will determine if the owner is eligible, and offer a choice of participating vet clinics.
- (v) Numbered desexing vouchers are sent to owners, indicating the chosen vet clinic and an expiry date of one month to encourage owners to make a booking as soon as possible (sample voucher available).
- (vi) Cat owners contact the chosen vet clinic to make an appointment. They give the voucher to the vet clinic at the time of desexing, as well as pay their contribution.
- (vii) Vet clinics return the vouchers and a claim form to NDN at the end of each month for reimbursement.
- (viii) Whenever possible, the NDN team checks and recontacts cat owners with unredeemed vouchers to help/encourage them to proceed.

We look forward to working with you to develop this proactive program in your city/shire. For further information, please contact me on 0417 788 063 or jverrinder@awlqld.com.au.



Dr Joy Verrinder PhD BA DipT MBA MA (Professional Ethics and Governance)
Strategic Director
AWLQ, National Desexing Network and G2Z Australia