


CITY OF KALAMUNDA

Cat Local Law 2023 Amendment

ENGAGEMENT REPORT
OCTOBER 2023



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Phase 1 – Background

The City of Kalamunda initiated a community engagement campaign to gather public input on the proposed Cat Local Law 2022.

This engagement was designed to provide ample opportunities for residents and stakeholders to voice their opinions and concerns regarding the proposed legislation. The engagement process ran from 14 January 2022 to 25 February 2022.

The community's response to the engagement campaign was significant, indicating a high level of interest in the Cat Local Law.

The following data highlights the extent of community participation –

- A total of 126 submissions were received through the online survey. This suggests a substantial level of community involvement in providing detailed feedback and opinions.
- The Engage poll received 17 separate submissions, showing that some individuals preferred the simplified format of the poll to express their views.
- Paid social media advertisements generated substantial community interaction. These advertisements garnered over 500 comments, indicating that residents were actively discussing and sharing their opinions on the proposed Cat Local Law. Community moderation played a vital role in managing these discussions.
- The Engage platform witnessed an 8% engagement success rate, with 129 visitors actively participating in the survey. This percentage is calculated based on the ratio of active participants to the total number of visitors, which amounted to 1,700. The Engage platform served as an effective medium for fostering dialogue on the proposed law.



Phase 2 – Current

On 18 April 2023 the City resolved to make the Keeping and Control of Cats Local Law 2023 at the Ordinary Council Meeting.

The Keeping and Control of Cats Local Law 2023 was gazetted on 10 May 2023, the Local Law came into effect on 24 May 2023.

On 24 May 2023 the City provided an explanatory memorandum along with a copy of the Local Law and the Gazettal to the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation under 3.12 procedure for making local laws.

Following the review made by the JSCDL, the Committee requests the following undertakings:

- Within 6 months, delete clause 3.9(1)(b)
- All consequential amendments arising from undertaking 1 will be made.
- Clause 3.9(1)(b) will not be enforced in a manner contrary to undertaking 1.
- Where the local law is made publicly available by the City, whether in hard copy or electronic form, ensure that it is accompanied by a copy of the undertaking.

The City reviewed the Local Law and the only reference to Clause 3.9(1)(b) is in reference to the conditions in relation to the keeping of cats.

Due to the change to the Local Law, the City was required to advertise for a 6week consultation period.

In response to the proposed change, the City initiated a community engagement process to gather feedback and gauge public sentiment.

Comments closed 5pm, Friday 20 October 2023. Phase 2 consultation received:

61

Aware Visitors

20

Responses Received

2

Direct Submission



Raising Awareness

Engagement Methods

The City of Kalamunda employed a multi-faceted approach to engage with the community regarding this proposed amendment. The following methods were used:

Public Notice

The initial public notice was posted on the City's website, social media channels, and in local newspapers. It provided information about the proposed amendment and the purpose behind it.

Feedback Channels

Multiple channels were provided for community members to submit feedback. These included an online form, in-person consultations at the City of Kalamunda's office, email submissions, and traditional postal submissions.

Submissions were accepted until 5pm 20 October 2023.

Feedback Overview

A total of 20 submissions were received in response to the proposed amendment. The submissions represent a diverse range of perspectives within the community. Here is a summary of the feedback:

3 Support the amendment 

These individuals expressed support for the amendment, citing concerns about wildlife protection and the need to ensure responsible cat ownership.

Neutral – zero (0) submissions:

No submissions were categorised as neutral; all responses were either in favor or against the proposed amendment.

17 Did not support the amendment



A common concern among these submissions was the negative impact of cats on local wildlife, particularly birds and reptiles. Respondents were apprehensive about weakening the control over cats.

Some submissions expressed a desire for the City of Kalamunda to take a stronger stance on cat control and the protection of native wildlife.

Several respondents emphasized the need for cats to be contained on their owners' properties to prevent nuisances and harm to local fauna.

Some submissions highlighted the need for the City to work toward changing state legislation to strengthen cat control measures.

A few respondents mentioned personal experiences with cat-related issues, such as cats killing wildlife on their properties.

Comments



Respondent 1: Should be the same as dog laws...keep cats inside and / or on the property ...a cat run isn't hard to make ..



Respondent 2: As a volunteer with Kanyana Wildlife, knowing the injuries and fatalities we see and the impact on our beautiful native animals, already tired hospital volunteers and limited funds, we would hate to see the council's cat laws further weakened by pressure groups. We do understand that the Cat Act makes things difficult but we would like to see the CoK make a stand on behalf of the wildlife that makes our area so wonderful to live in. (On a personal note, it makes me sad that pet rescues received hundreds of thousands of dollars last year from the state government, while wildlife rescues like Kanyana received nothing. It feels like the government only pays lip service to wildlife and the environment. We love our pets too and absolutely support the work that pet rescues do, but considering the costs borne by organisations like ours as a result of irresponsible pet owners, we just found it disappointing that our work was overlooked).



Respondent 3: This takes any responsibility away from owners ensuring their cats are not being a nuisance. It is important that residents who either don't have cats or who are responsibly managing their cats are able to have some support in ensuring cats that are not contained can be appropriately managed.



Comments ... continued



Respondent 4: Due to the incredibly damaging impact cats (domestic/feral) have on our local environment. Do not remove a clause that will help contain cats to their premises. I work at Kanyana wildlife rehabilitation centre in Kalamunda. I have seen first hand the damage cat's do to our wildlife. Quenda's, birdlife, reptiles all have been victims of cat attacks. I have video footage of local cats in my area prowling at night on a nightly basis. As a ratepayer of 10 plus years and responsible cat owner, (our cats are contained on our property and inside if we are not home). I am appalled that a city such as Kalamunda does not do enough to protect the environment we are lucky to live in. We need far more done to protect our wildlife. The City of Kalamunda should be leading the way in stronger, more policed cat laws. Not to mention leading the way in more wildlife friendly roads, such as road refuges that go under busy roads. Demanding road trains carting grain have the correct linings inside their trailers to prevent grain spillage which encourages local 28 parrots, Galahs, Corella's to name a few to be sitting on the side of the road. This behaviour endangers the bird life as they become victims of cars and oncoming traffic. In conclusion why is the City of Kalamunda not doing more? Is that not the reason people move to the hills area? To be closer to nature? So as I mentioned above. Do not remove a policy that goes above and beyond the 'basic' requirements for cat's and their containment.



Respondent 5: Too many cats roaming around at night



Comments ... continued



Respondent 6: Clause 3.9(1)(b) of the City's Keeping and Control of Cats Local Law 2023 should NOT be removed. Although I understand that many owners struggle to contain their cat(s), the Council should focus on implementing necessary strategies that encourage containment (e.g. cat enclosures) as opposed to removing a necessary local law. Pet cats who are allowed to roam are responsible for the deaths of approximately 390 million mammals, birds and reptiles across the country annually. Although pet cats do not kill as many animals as their feral counterparts do, they are still a detriment to our native fauna populations.

Furthermore, allowing cats to roam wherever they like puts them at risk of being run over by vehicles, getting attacked by dogs and other predatory species, engaging in fights with other cats, and being purposely injured by humans for sport. Cats who are solely kept indoors can be content with their confinement, provided that they receive the enrichment and stimulation that is required.

The cat laws of the future will undoubtedly enforce the confinement of cats to their properties, unless they are supervised by their owners. The City of Kalamunda should reconsider the removal of Clause 3.9(1)(b) if they wish to make the future today



Respondent 7: Cats should be contained on the property. They should not be allowed to roam around the neighbourhood killing native wildlife. It shows a complete lack of responsibility on behalf of the City if they remove this clause. They should be looking to enhance the protection of wildlife by actually enforcing the laws!



Respondent 8: I have intentionally built a native-plant garden with the purpose of encouraging native wildlife, including birds. Roaming cats are a deterrent to native wildlife.

The removal of this clause seems to be counter to one of the basic purposes of the law, ie. "cats not to be a nuisance".



Respondent 9: No comment

Respondent 10: I believe all cats should not only be contained within their own property but also kept inside, or in catios or other containment such that they cannot harm native animals, reptiles and birds. I look forward to the state government updating cat laws to reflect the dire State of our Environment, as highlighted by Minister Plibersek, and in alignment for her call for a war on feral cats: <https://minister.dcceew.gov.au/plibersek/media-releases/government-declares-war-feral-cats>

Comments ... continued



Respondent 11: I recognise that the City's hands are tied by State legislation, however I would encourage the City to liaise with other Councils to progress revision of the State legislation to allow for the reinstatement of the City's original wording of Clause 3.9 (1) (b).



Respondent 12: Cats should be contained, I have to keep my dog on my property but cats are allowed to roam and damage the native wildlife. I have cats come onto my property and kill the birds and my pond fish.

Not fair for us who don't have cats but have to deal with other people's cats doing damage.



Respondent 13: Cats kill an incredible number of native wildlife including birds, lizards and small mammals. If we care about our local native wildlife, we need to have better control of cats. This amendment would make further animal losses due to cats more likely and should not be supported.



Respondent 14: Cats should be controlled with same rules as for dogs



Respondent 15: I believe Cats are a nuisance here in the lovely suburb of Lesmurdie because they destroy wildlife, particularly birds. Cat owners do not control their cats according to the current law due to the fact that Cats are uncontrollable unless kept in a cage 24 hours a day. So reducing the law is a backward step. If cats are allowed outside they should be restrained by a collar and rope attached, along with a bell. No Cats in Lesmurdie.



Respondent 16: By deleting this phrase I see the act being weakened in controlling cats, hence making our bird and fauna vulnerable to preying cats. The minimum requirement should be that cats are registered, chipped and made wear a collar and bell. The bell would help give the birds a fighting chance.



Respondent 17: Owners should have to control their pets when outdoors.



Respondent 18: This is ridiculous to propose to remove such a clause in a City with such important at risk wildlife.



Respondent 19: Cats need to be retained on residents own premises. Cats are such effective predators and kill so many quendas and native animals senselessly.



Respondent 20: Please keep cats on property. I have bandicoots on my property & neighbour's cats regularly come over & kill them. Try to educate neighbours & no luck. Please stop cats roaming streets. Dogs can't. Protect our wildlife.

Direct Submissions

Hello

As as a resident of Gooseberry Hill I've just seen the consultation to remove the below from our local laws:

The City proposes to make an amendment to the Keeping and Control of Cats Local Law 2023 to remove Clause 3.9(1)(b) "Each cat shall be contained on the premises unless under the effective control of a person";

Is this true and correct?

I entirely reject the removal of this clause.

Since neighbors have moved in with cats that roam freely at night the Quendas that lived on that side of my property have gone. I also found one dead quenda on that side of my property and never have before. (they live next to a reserve also).

Cats should be by law made to be kept inside or under control of a human in the hills at all times.

Why would the City propose to remove such a clause with all our at risk wildlife?



Dear [REDACTED]

This is to thank Council for the new City of Kalamunda (CoK) local cat law.

As far as I know (and I have looked at a few), CoK's cat law is Australia's most comprehensive. Congratulations to you, as Mayor, and Council, and the KESAC and staff.

I would prefer that the law required cats to be kept indoors and/or confined a cat run on the owner's property, although I appreciate that many cat owners may not like this prospect.

The CoK law brochure mentions the risk that cats spread toxoplasma gondii which, as you would be aware, is a parasite that is a considerable risk to the health of humans, unborn babies, wildlife (mammals and birds), livestock, and poultry (below are a couple of articles to add to this fyi). I am very pleased to see that this risk is mentioned in the new brochure.

I am interested as to whether the CoK Health Service has a policy and process, and information to residents and ratepayers, about this risk as well. I would appreciate feedback about this.

Yours sincerely,



Recommendations

The community engagement process revealed a number of respondents unsupportive of amendment.

Concerns were mainly centred around the impact of cats on local wildlife and the importance of containing cats on their owners' properties.

The feedback suggests a strong desire within the community to prioritize wildlife protection while also addressing the concerns of responsible cat owners.

The City should consider the following recommendations based on the community feedback:



Explore alternative strategies to encourage responsible cat ownership, such as the promotion of cat enclosures and catios.



Collaborate with other Councils to advocate for changes in State Legislation to support stronger cat control measures.



Continue to engage with the community to strike a balance between cat owner rights and wildlife protection.



Survey Results

Demographics

