

Notice of the Ordinary meeting of
Cat Management Bylaw
Consultation Panel – Deliberations
Agenda | Rārangi take



Date:	Friday 15 November 2024
Time:	1.00p.m.
Location:	Council Chamber Floor 2A, Civic House 110 Trafalgar Street, Nelson

Chairperson Cr Matty Anderson
Members Cr Matthew Bengé
Cr Rachel Sanson

Quorum 2

Nigel Philpott
Chief Executive

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Nelson City Council Disclaimer

Please note that the contents of these Council and Committee agendas have yet to be considered by Council and officer recommendations may be altered or changed by the Council in the process of making the formal Council decision. For enquiries call (03) 5460436.

Karakia and Mihi Timatanga

1. Apologies
2. Confirmation of Order of Business
3. Interests
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Karakia Whakamutanga

Procedural Items

1. Apologies
Nil
2. Confirmation of Order of Business
3. Interests
 - 3.1 Updates to the Interests Register
 - 3.2 Identify any conflicts of interest in the agenda
7. Public Forum
There is no public forum
5. Confirmation of Minutes - 01 November 2024 4 - 5

That the Consultation Panel

- 1. Confirms the minutes of the meeting of the Draft Cat Management Bylaw Consultation Panel, held on 01 November 2024, as a true and correct record.**

Draft Cat Management Bylaw Consultation Panel Minutes - 1 November 2024



**Minutes of a meeting of the
Draft Cat Management Bylaw Consultation Panel**

Te Rōpū Rongonga

Held in the Council Chamber, Floor 2A, Civic House, 110 Trafalgar Street, Nelson on Friday 1 November 2024, commencing at 9.04a.m. - Draft Cat Management Bylaw - to hear Submissions

Present: Councillors M Anderson (Chairperson), M Benge and R Sanson

In Attendance: Group Manager Environmental Management (M Bishop),
Governance Adviser (A Bryce) and Assistant Governance
Adviser (M Taylor)

Apologies : Nil

Karakia and Mihi Timatanga

1. Apologies

No apologies were received.

2. Confirmation of Order of Business

There was no change to the order of business.

3. Interests

Councillor Sanson declared a non-pecuniary interest and stepped away when her partner, Scott Burnett, from Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society spoke at the meeting.

There were no updates to the Interests Register.

4. Public Forum

There was no public forum.

5. Hearing of submissions on Draft Cat Management Bylaw

Document number R28869, agenda pages 4 - 6 refer.

Item 5: Confirmation of Minutes - 01 November 2024: Attachment 1

Draft Cat Management Bylaw Consultation Panel Minutes - 1 November 2024

Resolved CPMCC/2024/006

That the Consultation Panel

1. Receives the report Hearing of submissions on Draft Cat Management Bylaw (R28869) and its attachment.

Benge/Sanson

Carried

Attachments

1 Draft Cat Management Bylaw - Hearing Schedule - 01 November 2024

5.1 Scott Burnett – Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society – 98

Scott Burnett, spoke to his submission. He answered questions on a cap on cat numbers in households, toxoplasmosis, feral cats and Nelson City Council and Tasman District Council bylaw alignment.

5.2 Jessi Morgan – Predator Free New Zealand Trust – 105

Jessi Morgan, spoke to her submission. She answered questions on the age of cat desexing, feral cats, registered cat breeders, rodent population, cat nuisance and management of roaming, and Local Government advocacy for a National Cat Act.

5.3 Elaine Asquith – Tasman Environment Trust – 101

Elaine Asquith, spoke to her submission. She answered questions on the Live and Let Live project and feral control.

5.4 Jessica Walker – SPCA – 142

Jessica Walker, provided a presentation and spoke to her submission. She answered questions on SPCA collaboration with Nelson City Council, vaccinations, rehoming of cats, various cat categories, the snip and chip program and tracking complaints.

Tabled Document from Draft Cat Management Bylaw Hearing (01 November 2024)

The following document was provided in support of the hearing of submissions.

Attachments

1 142 - Jessica Walker - SPCA Presentation

Karakia Whakamutanga

There being no further business the meeting ended at 10.30a.m.

Confirmed as a correct record of proceedings by resolution on (date) -
Resolution

Report Title: Draft Cat Management Bylaw Deliberations
Report Author: Richard Frizzell - Environmental Programmes Officer
Report Authoriser: Mandy Bishop - Group Manager Environmental Management
Report Number: R28873

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To summarise the feedback received on the Draft Cat Management Bylaw and provide staff advice on the issues raised in the feedback.
- 1.2 To recommend an amended Cat Management Bylaw for adoption by Council.

2. Summary

- 2.1 Council established a Consultation Panel at its meeting on 5 September 2024 to consider written and oral submissions on the Draft Cat Management Bylaw (Draft Bylaw) and to make recommendations to the full Council.
- 2.2 This report provides the Consultation Panel with a summary of the written and oral feedback received during the Draft Bylaw consultation process; and officer recommendations related to the feedback. The recommendations align with the approach being taken by Tasman District Council (TDC), which held its deliberations meeting on 15 October 2024.

3. Recommendation

That the Consultation Panel

- 1. Receives the report Draft Cat Management Bylaw – Deliberations Report (R28873) and its attachments; and**
- 2. Delegates the Chair of the Consultation Panel and the Group Manager Environmental Management to approve minor editorial corrections or amendments to the Cat Management**

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Bylaw (NDOCS 596364813-11984) prior to adoption by Council.

Recommendation to Council

That the Council

1. Notes that:

a) the recommended amendment to the Cat Management Bylaw in Attachment 2 of report R28873 in relation to the transition period, differs from the proposed bylaw clause in the Statement of Proposal; and

b) the recommended amendment to the Cat Management Bylaw in Attachment 2 of report R28873 responds to views presented on the proposed bylaw clause in the Statement of Proposal; and

2. Agrees that the recommended clause in the Cat Management Bylaw in Attachment 2 of report R28873 in relation to the transition period:

a) does not require additional consultation; and

b) is within the scope of decisions that can be taken following consideration of views presented on the Statement of Proposal; and

3. Determines that the amended Cat Management Bylaw is the most appropriate way to address the perceived problems related to the keeping of cats; it is the most appropriate form of Bylaw; and any limits under the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 are reasonable and proportional, for the reasons set out in this report (R28873); and

4. Adopts the amended Cat Management Bylaw (596364813-11984); and

5. Determines that the amended Cat Management Bylaw will commence on 19 Dec 2024.

4. Background

4.1 On 5 September 2024, Council approved a Statement of Proposal for a Draft Cat Management Bylaw for public consultation. Public consultation, using the Special Consultative Procedure, was undertaken from 9 September to 9 October 2024. A hearing was held on 1 November. A summary of the 141 submissions received is provided in Attachment 1 and a full copy of the submissions are available in the Consultation Panel Agenda on Council's website <http://meetings.nelson.govt.nz/>.

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- 4.2 Four submitters gave oral submissions at the hearing on 1 November 2024: Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society, Predator Free New Zealand Trust, Tasman Environmental Trust, and the SPCA. All organisations supported the Bylaw with some suggested changes. The Draft Bylaw was widely supported with 128 (more than 91%) in support and 13 opposed (9%).
- 4.3 Submitters' feedback focused on nuisance, health, and wildlife impacts associated with cats roaming beyond cat owners' properties. Some submitters sought additional controls related to:
- requiring cat curfews/containment on the cat owner's property
 - limiting the number of cats per household
 - bringing forward the date by which existing cats need to be microchipped and desexed (from 1 June 2027 to 1 June 2026)
 - including restrictions on feeding stray cats on public property to avoid the establishment of stray cat colonies
 - lowering the age at which desexing is required (from six months to four months) and
 - lowering the age at which microchipping and registration of the microchip is required (from six months to four months).

5. Discussion

- 5.1 An amended Cat Management Bylaw that reflects the recommendations in this report is included in Attachment 2. (Recommended changes from the proposed version that went out for consultation are highlighted in yellow.)

Submissions summary

- 5.2 A total of 141 submissions were received on the Statement of Proposal for a Draft Cat Management Bylaw. (These are numbered from 1–142 as there is no submission number 99.) Most of the submissions (128) supported the Draft Cat Management Bylaw (Draft Bylaw) and 13 submitters opposed it. The requested changes to the Draft Bylaw which are within the scope of Council's bylaw-making powers are listed in the following table:

Request	Number of submitters
Require all cats to be kept indoors at night.	7
Require cat containment to the owner's property.	8

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Limit the number of cats per household.	7
Bring forward the date for all existing cats to be microchipped and desexed (to 1 June 2026 instead of 1 June 2027).	4
Include restrictions around feeding stray cats on public land.	2
Change the age for desexing to four months.	3
Change the age for microchipping and registering of the microchip to four months.	1

5.3 The other requests for changes to the Draft Bylaw included:

- requiring cats to wear a bell
- impounding wandering cats and
- issuing fines to owners of wandering cats.

5.4 A few submissions sought exemptions for cat breeders (two submissions) and for cats which are medically unfit to be desexed (one submission). Both of these exemptions are already provided for in the Draft Bylaw in clauses 5.1(b)(i) and 5.1(b)(ii).

5.5 In addition to the general bylaw-making power related to keeping of animals, Council has the power to make bylaws related to nuisance and public health and safety. Submitter feedback related to these matters is discussed in section 6 of this report, followed by other matters.

6. Matters relating to nuisance and public health and safety

6.1 The Draft Bylaw requires any cat over six months of age to be:

- microchipped and the cat's microchip registered with the New Zealand Companion Animal Register and
- desexed.

6.2 Exemptions apply for cats kept for breeding purposes and registered with a nationally recognised cat breeders body, and for cats that a vet has certified as being unable to be desexed due to health and/or welfare concerns. While the Draft Bylaw would apply immediately for kittens born

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after the Bylaw commences, a transition period for existing cats applies until 1 June 2027.

Nuisance and public health

- 6.3 Thirteen of the 128 submitters in support of the Draft Bylaw described the nuisance and public health-related impacts of wandering cats, including:
- Unspayed/neutered cats spraying on furniture and curtains, and terrorising the neighbourhood cats (submission 11)
 - Fighting (submissions 11 and 52)
 - Cats defecating in soil, sandpits and gardens, including vegetable gardens – which is both a nuisance and a public health hazard, and is a risk factor for transmission of toxoplasmosis to people and other animals (submissions 36, 38, 55, 76, 78, 94, 98, 101, 125 and 142)
 - Digging up seedlings (submission 78)
 - Intruding on private property (submission 98)
 - Having to keep doors shut in hot weather to prevent cats entering the house (submission 36)
 - Public health issues for owners and neighbours due to over-population of cats in an area (submission 105).
- 6.4 The SPCA (submission 142) asked Council to improve its tracking of nuisance associated with roaming cats, including property damage, spraying and defecating on neighbouring properties, and fighting with other cats, causing injuries that require veterinary treatment.
- 6.5 The SPCA is concerned that the true scale of nuisance related to un-desexed and roaming companion cats is not fully communicated to local councils. It regularly receives emails and calls from the public about cat nuisance, and about predation on native wildlife and spread of disease. It considers cat owners should be responsible for preventing nuisance.

Officer recommendations

- 6.6 Retain the requirements for microchipping and registration, and for desexing, which will help to address the nuisance and public health concerns listed above. Public communications about the Draft Bylaw will include details on how to report cat nuisance issues to the Council (that will be shared with the SPCA) and provide information on how to be responsible cat owners.

Curfews and containment of cats

- 6.7 The Draft Bylaw does not include requirements for cat owners to prevent their cats from wandering beyond their property. Eight submitters

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requested overnight containment (submissions 20, 43, 49, 52, 55, 107) or full-time containment of cats on the owner's property (submissions 106, 107 and 142). One submitter (141) recommended future controls restricting the physical space cats can occupy.

- 6.8 The submission from the SPCA (142) advised that cats can have positive welfare and their physical, health, behavioural, emotional and mental needs met whilst keeping them at home as indoor-only cats or with access to a secure outdoor enclosure or a garden with an escape-proof fence. Keeping cats at home can reduce the risk of welfare harm from disease, injury, fighting, vehicle accidents, and becoming lost – and help minimise their negative impact on people and animals in communities.

Officer recommendations

- 6.9 Imposing a requirement for cats to remain on the owner's property would be a significant change which was not discussed during the consultation process. Considering this matter again when the bylaw is next reviewed in five years' time, may allow time for social expectations related to responsible cat management to change. This approach aligns with TDC's approach on this issue.
- 6.10 As noted in TDC's Cat Management Bylaw Deliberations Agenda, dated 15 October 2024, if legislative measures continue to develop at a national level this could be revisited when the bylaw is reviewed within five years. In the meantime, staff can incorporate information about cat containment in educational resources.
- 6.11 Eight submissions requested overnight containment of cats (or a curfew). However, Australia's night-time curfew is less relevant to New Zealand conditions. Hunting of birds, reptiles and invertebrates occurs at all hours in New Zealand, whereas Australia's nocturnal mammals are more vulnerable to overnight predation by cats.

The number of cats per household

- 6.12 The Draft Bylaw does not set limits on the number of cats per household. Six submitters asked Council to set a limit on the number of cats per household (submissions 52, 85, 97, 98, 101, 105 and 142). The reasons for this request included reducing cat nuisance and the development of cat colonies. One submitter (141) recommended placing restrictions on the number of cats per property/owner in the future.
- 6.13 The submission from the SPCA (142) advised the limit should be set no lower than three cats per dwelling, with criteria such as microchipping, desexing and keeping cats on the owner's property. At the hearing, the Royal Forest & Bird Society (98) advised that 18 councils have a limit on the number of cats per household, with three cats generally being the maximum. This provision could act as a backstop in situations where nuisance issues were occurring.
- 6.14 Predator Free New Zealand Trust (105) also supported limiting the number of cats per households at the hearing, noting that the ability to

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limit cat numbers is particularly important in areas with large numbers of cats. Without a limit per household, Council is unable to respond to nuisance impacts on neighbours.

Officer recommendation

- 6.15 Setting a limit on the number of cats permitted per household would be a significant change from the proposed bylaw that has not been discussed with the community and is likely to cause significant concern for people with more than three cats. Reconsidering this issue when the bylaw is next reviewed in five years' time would align with TDC's approach.

Transition period for existing cats

- 6.16 The Draft Bylaw includes a transition period for existing cats (at the time the amended Draft Bylaw is adopted) to be microchipped and desexed by 1 June 2027. Four submitters (76, 98, 105 and 111) asked Council to bring forward the date by when all existing cats must be microchipped and desexed by one year (by 1 June 2026 rather than 1 June 2027) to avoid unnecessary delays in implementing the Draft Bylaw.
- 6.17 At the hearing Predator Free New Zealand (105) requested that the requirement for microchipping and desexing apply as soon as the Draft Bylaw takes effect for any young cats.

Officer recommendation

- 6.18 Change the transition date for existing cats from 1 June 2027 to 1 June 2026. This change provides 1.5 years for cat owners to arrange for microchipping and desexing of their existing cats, which is a reasonable length of time. It also means the benefits from the Draft Bylaw provisions will take effect sooner, while continuing to align with TDC's approach.
- 6.19 The public communications about this Draft Bylaw will make it clear that the bylaw provisions apply immediately to cats born after the bylaw is adopted, while current owners will have until 1 June 2026 to arrange the desexing and microchipping for their existing cats.

Restrictions on feeding stray cats

- 6.20 The Draft Bylaw does not include a restriction on feeding stray cats. Two submitters (101 and 105) asked Council to include restrictions on feeding stray cats on public land.
- 6.21 At the hearing, the Tasman Environmental Trust (101) discussed areas in Tasman where people are known to drop off kittens, and people understandably feel sorry for them and feed them. However, a much better way to help the kittens is to tell the SPCA and councils have an important role in communicating this message.

Officer recommendation

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- 6.22 Include messages about reporting abandoned kittens to the SPCA in public communications campaigns about the Bylaw provisions. Reassessing how significant this issue is when the bylaw is reviewed within five years would align with TDC's approach.

Desexing age

- 6.23 The Draft Bylaw requires desexing to be completed by the time cats are six months old. Three submitters (16, 141 and 142) asked Council to drop the age for desexing to four months because females can be already pregnant by four months.
- 6.24 At the hearing, the SPCA (142) noted that half of the kittens surrendered to the Nelson SPCA centre are the result of unplanned breeding. The SPCA submission advised that kittens can be safely desexed earlier than the traditional age of four to six months. The SPCA regularly desexes kittens at the age of eight weeks. Early desexing does not adversely affect the physiological or behavioural development in cats; it is a faster procedure with a quicker recovery time for the kitten; and it reduces the likelihood of some cat behaviours such as spraying, straying and vocalising later in life.
- 6.25 In response to a question at the hearing, the Predator Free New Zealand Trust (105) advised that both the SPCA and vets recommend that desexing be carried out by the time a kitten is four months old.

Officer recommendation

- 6.26 Retain the proposed age of six months for the desexing requirement. It is possible for female cats to have kittens before they are six months old, and it would be ideal to lower the desexing age to four months. However, retaining the six-month limit provides consistency in Nelson and Tasman, and it gives owners two extra months to comply with the Bylaw.

Microchipping age

- 6.27 The Draft Bylaw requires microchipping and registration of the microchip to be completed by the time cats are six months old. One submission (142) requested a change to this requirement from six months to four months to help ensure kittens benefit from having a registered microchip at a young age.

Officer recommendation

- 6.28 Retaining the six-month limit provides consistency in Nelson and Tasman, and it gives owners two extra months to comply with the Bylaw.

Opposition to the Draft Bylaw

- 6.29 Thirteen submitters opposed some or all aspects of the Draft Bylaw (submissions 13, 18, 30, 47, 53, 68, 72, 74, 75, 83, 89, 95 and 140). The concerns are:

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- Most cats are already microchipped and desexed, and the remaining 12% of cat owners will ignore the Bylaw.
- There will be a lack of kittens to adopt if all cats are desexed. If cat breeding is to be allowed only by registered breeders, it promotes the commercialisation of pet cats. As most professional breeders already sell kittens for over \$1,000, this makes a cat an expensive pet. In response to a question at the hearing, the SPCA advised that even with the Draft Bylaw in place it's unlikely there will be no low-cost kittens to adopt in future, due to the high breeding rates of cats.
- For low-income residents \$252 plus \$75 quoted for desexing, microchipping and registration of the microchip could be half their wages or all their benefit. Subsidised Snip 'n' Chip campaigns need to be held in Nelson.
- Vets may be regarded as likely to report owners of unchipped cats so medical treatment may be avoided for pets, causing welfare issues.
- Education is preferred to regulation.
- Council should be focusing on more important matters.

Officer comments

- 6.30 Making microchipping and desexing of cats a requirement rather than an option will enable vets and the SPCA to communicate a stronger message about what cat owners need to do. Officers consider the issue of fewer low-cost kittens being available in future is outweighed by the animal welfare impacts, the demands on the SPCA, the nuisance effects for the wider community, and the impacts on wildlife from uncontrolled breeding of cats.
- 6.31 If prospective cat owners are unable to cover the initial expenses, they may not be well-prepared for the ongoing responsibilities of pet ownership, including paying for pet food and future veterinary care. The SPCA (submission 142) advised it is happy to support and work with Council to provide comprehensive services for cat owners to help cat owners overcome the cost barriers to desexing and microchipping cats. Details about the SPCA's Snip 'n' Chip Council Package are included with the submission and provides detailed information about how the organisation works with local councils to promote more responsible cat ownership.
- 6.32 The existing content on Council's website about responsible cat ownership will be complemented by an awareness campaign about the new bylaw provisions, and other initiatives to raise awareness of the impacts of roaming cats and to educate owners to manage their cat responsibly.
- 6.33 Adopting the Draft Bylaw is appropriate as it is strongly supported by the community, it complements the adopted provisions in the recently

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reviewed Tasman-Nelson Pest Management Plan, and it aligns with TDC's adoption of a Cat Management Bylaw in November 2024.

7. Other matters

Animal welfare and wildlife

7.1 Eight submissions appreciated the animal welfare and wildlife benefits of the Draft Bylaw (submitters 22, 34, 41, 61, 79, 82, 101 and 142).

7.2 The SPCA (submission 142) advised that desexing can reduce the risk of certain diseases, reduce the likelihood of roaming (which can increase risks of harm such as disease and infection, injury and becoming lost), and increase lifespan. Desexing can also prevent the mortality of unplanned kittens which is often overlooked as a welfare problem.

7.3 Impacts on wildlife was an issue for 25 submitters, who have the following concerns:

- Cats are predators of native birds (submissions 38, 40, 43, 46, 52, 56, 58, 66, 67, 88, 93, 94, 97, 98, 101, 103, 105, 109, 113, 125, 127 and 138)
- Cats are also predators of other wildlife including lizards, skinks, bats and invertebrates (submissions 40, 46, 58, 66, 67, 84, 98, 101, 103, 105, 114 and 127)
- Three submitters noted some specific impacts: kittens being dumped in the Maitai Valley which then became feral (submission 66), a NCC Halo area lacks bird song due to the presence of cats (submission 80) and loss of weka in Marsden Valley as residential development has led to an increase in cat and dogs (submitter 125).

Stray and feral cats

7.4 The impacts of feral cats was discussed by 16 submitters (submissions 10, 40, 58, 64, 67, 77, 79, 88, 94, 97, 98, 101, 105, 114, 125 and 138). In response to questions at the hearing about wild cat numbers:

- the Royal Forest & Bird Society (98) advised that there are likely to be more wild cats than owned cats in New Zealand. The extent of the problem had only become fully apparent in recent years through the use of trail cameras.
- the Predator Free New Zealand Trust (105) said the number of wild cats in New Zealand is unknown and could be between two million and 14 million. The numbers in any particular area depend on food availability (particularly rabbits), which drives population growth.

7.5 At the hearing the Predator Free New Zealand Trust (105) explained that cat management in areas near homes is not currently possible due to the risk of pet cat trapping which would undermine the predator control being carried out by councils and community groups.

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- 7.6 Tasman Environmental Trust (101) also discussed at the hearing a Tasman project where site-led cat control is occurring (with live capture to differentiate between companion and feral cats) in collaboration with the SPCA and with support from the community.
- 7.7 Stray and feral cats are not directly managed through the Draft Bylaw – but Council does have powers to manage feral populations through the Tasman Nelson Regional Pest Management Plan, under the Biosecurity Act 1993.
- 7.8 Unfortunately, Nelson’s feral cat population is self-sustaining due to uncontrolled breeding within that population. However, the Draft Bylaw and Regional Pest Management Plan provisions are complementary because:
- Limiting the number of unwanted litters of companion kittens reduces the risk of them becoming strays and going on to have multiple litters of cats which then prey on indigenous wildlife to survive.
 - Requiring companion cats to be microchipped and have the microchip registered will enable Council and community to distinguish between companion cats and feral cats in high-value conservation areas.

Advocacy to central government

- 7.9 At the hearing, the Predator Free New Zealand Trust (105) asked Council to advocate for a National Cat Act through its forums and connections with central government. It could include provisions to be able to have ‘no cat wandering’ zones at a local level.
- 7.10 The Royal Forest & Bird Society (98) said at the hearing that local bylaws are a useful first step towards having a National Cat Act, and advised that following a national select committee, two private members bills (from two different parties) have been submitted.

Implementation costs for the Draft Bylaw

- 7.11 The primary cost for Council will be the staff time required to run an education and awareness campaign about the adopted Bylaw provisions. This can include consistent messaging with Tasman District, and ‘joined up’ information about the Cat Management Bylaw and the cat-related provisions in the Tasman-Nelson Regional Pest Management Plan.
- 7.12 Council currently has a memorandum of understanding with the SPCA on how the two organisations will work together. Council provides an annual grant to the SPCA, consisting of \$8,800 for dog management and \$5,300 for other animals. This funding is fully allocated, so additional budget would be required if Council wishes to run a Snip ‘n’ Chip campaign with the SPCA.

8. Options

- 8.1 The Consultation Panel has two options:

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- Recommend adoption of the Draft Bylaw, with the proposed amendment (this is the preferred option); or
- Do not recommend adoption of the Draft Bylaw.

Option 1: Recommend adoption of the Draft Bylaw, with the amendment (preferred option)	
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Draft Bylaw is supported by 91% of submitters, aligns with TDC’s approach to companion cat management, and is complementary to the management of feral and stray cats under the Tasman–Nelson Regional Pest Management Plan. • The Draft Bylaw supports responsible cat ownership to reduce nuisance and health impacts, with co-benefits related to animal welfare and biodiversity. • Adoption of the Draft Bylaw provides a good opportunity to raise awareness about responsible cat ownership.
Risks and Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LGA02 does not provide for infringement fines associated with this Bylaw, which limits the actions Council can take to more formal steps if cat owners choose to ignore the Bylaw.
Option 2: Do not recommend adoption of the Draft Bylaw.	
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not adopting the Draft Bylaw would free up some staff time to focus on Council’s other priorities.
Risks and Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not address the ongoing nuisance and public health issues associated with wandering cats. • Fails to address issues associated with lost and injured cats; and unwanted litters of kittens. • Fails to do anything in response to the community’s concerns about the impacts of cats on local wildlife. • No microchipping requirement limits Council’s ability to differentiate between companion cats and feral cats in high-value conservation

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	<p>reserves, impeding implementation of the Tasman-Nelson Regional Pest Management Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inconsistency with TDC.
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Legal requirements

- 8.2 If the Consultation Panel selects Option 1 officers consider the bylaw-making requirements outlined in section 155 of the LGA02 have been met, as these were addressed in the previous report to Council about the Proposed Draft Cat Management Bylaw (Report R28725) considered on 5 September 2024, and the proposed change to the Draft Bylaw does not alter that.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 The Draft Cat Management Bylaw aims to minimise nuisance and protect public health associated with wandering cats.
- 9.2 In response to submissions, staff have recommended requiring existing cats to be microchipped and desexed by 1 June 2026 (rather than 1 June 2027) and that the Bylaw provisions apply to all companion cats born after 5 December 2024.
- 9.3 The Panel's recommended changes will be reflected in the final Bylaw for adoption by Council at its meeting on 5 December 2024.
- 9.4 The Bylaw is a new bylaw and, once adopted, will be reviewed within five years.

10. Next Steps

- 10.1 The Draft Bylaw will be presented to the Council meeting on 5 December 2024 for approval and adoption.
- 10.2 Adoption and the proposed operative date of the bylaw will be publicly notified.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Draft Cat Management Bylaw Submission Summary [↓](#)

Attachment 2: 596364813-11984 - Amended Cat Management Bylaw [↓](#)

Important considerations for decision making
Fit with Purpose of Local Government The Draft Cat Management Bylaw supports the social wellbeing of the Nelson community by managing activities with the potential to cause nuisance and to impact on public health. It also has co-benefits for environmental wellbeing related to reduced predation on birds and other wildlife, and more ability to manage feral cats in high value conservation areas.
Consistency with Community Outcomes and Council Policy The Draft Cat Management Bylaw supports the following community outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our unique natural environment is healthy and protected.• Our communities are healthy, safe, inclusive and resilient. Our Council provides leadership and fosters partnerships, a regional perspective, and community engagement.
Risk There is a reputational risk if Council decides not to proceed with the Draft Bylaw after receiving significant public feedback in support of what was proposed during both the informal engagement and formal consultation processes. There is evidence that cats do not remain within their owner's property, are involved in nuisance behaviour, and can pose a threat to other cats and animals through fighting and the spread of toxoplasmosis.
Financial impact There are no funding implications associated with the Draft Bylaw once it has been adopted, other than public communications about the requirements.
Degree of significance and level of engagement The Draft Cat Management Bylaw is of high significance due to the high numbers of cat owners in Nelson. The Draft Bylaw potentially affects the proportion of the population who have cats which aren't already microchipped and desexed and is also of significant interest to Nelson residents who are concerned about the impacts of cats on the wider environment. Consultation through a special consultative procedure has been undertaken.

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Climate Impact

Climate change has been considered in relation to the Draft Bylaw. However, the scope of its provisions do not have the capacity to assist with (or to affect) climate change mitigation or adaptation.

Inclusion of Māori in the decision making process

No engagement with Māori has been undertaken in preparing this report.

Delegations

Council is responsible for final adoption of a bylaw but can delegate the following matters:

- Reviewing and determining whether a bylaw or amendment, revocation or replacement of a bylaw is appropriate.
- Undertaking community engagement, including all steps relating to Special Consultative Procedures or other formal consultation processes other than final approval.

Item 6: Draft Cat Management Bylaw Deliberations: Attachment 1

Attachment 1 – Submission Summary

	Support	Comments
1	Yes	
2	Yes	
3	Yes	
4	Yes	
5	Yes	
6	Yes	
7	Yes	Require evidence of desexing when kittens over six months are sold.
8	Yes	Protect our wildlife.
9	Yes	
10	Yes	Prefer feral cats to be sterilised and die naturally.
11	Yes	Impacts of neighbour's cats which are unspayed/neutered include spraying on furniture and curtains, fighting, and terrorising the neighbourhood cats.
12	Yes	Require cats to wear a bell to prevent them attacking and killing birds.
13	No	
14	Yes	
15	Yes	<p>It's time that improvements were made to cat ownership to ramp up protection of our endemic and native species. Many people refuse to believe the damage that cats do in the wild and have no idea where their cat is when not inside and they need to be made aware of the responsibilities that go with pet ownership.</p> <p>In the last 12 months Birdlife on Grampians have trapped over 200 possums and most of these are torn to bits and eaten out by starving cats who are either City cats or live full time on Grampians. My own home camera picks up dozens of Cats passing our home and none of these live around our area.</p>
16	Yes	Six months of age is too late, females can be already pregnant by four months. Drop the age to four months as long as they are of a suitable weight.
17	Yes	
18	No	<p>Irresponsible people are the cause of abandoned cats in the region. Most responsible pet owners already have microchipped and desexed their cats.</p> <p>Also, as a recent study has proven, hedgehogs can eat a substantial amount of native birds during their own night time hunting – shall we do the same with them?</p>
19	Yes	
20	Yes	All cats should be "under control " at night ... ie they need to be shut in between certain hours ... they shouldn't be allowed to wander freely and crap in other people's gardens.
21	Yes	
22	Yes	Protects cats as well as wildlife.
23	Yes	
24	Yes	
25	Yes	
26	Yes	

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27	Yes	
28	Yes	
29	Yes	
30	No	
31	Yes	
32	Yes	
33	Yes	
34	Yes	For both environmental and cat welfare reasons.
35	Yes	
36	Yes	<p>Cat owners allow their pets to unjustly intrude in my garden every day seriously affecting my enjoyment of my own property.</p> <p>In the last few years, the number of such cats has increased with many being strays that people in the street just start feeding but take no responsibility for. My wildlife camera has shown as many as six different cats coming into my property at night.</p> <p>If I plant anything or just dig up the soil, I can be certain that cats will have defecated on it or dug it up by the next day. They have also killed some of my goldfish and frequently kill native birds leaving their remains for me to dispose of.</p> <p>I can't leave my doors open on hot days because of cats trying to come into my house. This is having a negative effect on my mental health.</p> <p>Cats should be confined to their owners' properties like dogs are. If a cat enters my property, I should be free to trap it and hand it to the SPCA. Cats should be registered and chipped. The cost of this must be paid for by the owners.</p>
37	Yes	
38	Yes	We need to protect birds. Cat owners need to keep their cats on their own property as dog owners do. I don't like cat faeces in my garden.
39	Yes	
40	Yes	<p>Cats are natural predators and I think desexing is the most necessary.</p> <p>I have seen people dropping off family pets in the farming districts since I was a child. The cats that did not come to the farmhouse would turn feral in the bid to survive, and if they are desexed there are less cats to then breed in the wild and eat our native birds, lizards, eggs etc.</p>
41	Yes	We need to step up to protect our birds and hopefully reduce stray and unwanted cats.
42	Yes	
43	Yes	I hope this is the first step towards more stringent cat bylaws, such as those in place in the state of Victoria in Australia. Cats found wandering, particularly at night are a threat to our birdlife and it would be great to see more control over this.
44	Yes	
45	Yes	
46	Yes	I am concerned about the devastating effect of cats on native birds and lizards.

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47	No	<p>There should be exceptions allowed if this bylaw is undertaken. Older mature cats that never leave your property do not need to be micro chipped. I for example have a 17-year-old blind cat who doesn't leave the house, and putting him through this procedure would cause him undue stress. And those with medical conditions where this procedure would cause more harm or undue stress should also be exempt.</p> <p>My other concern is if all cats are desexed will this lead to the extinction of our beloved friends? Eventually there will be no more kittens to adopt.</p>
48	Yes	
49	Yes	I would support a dusk to dawn curfew for all cats, with cat catching patrols.
50	Yes	
51	Yes	
52	Yes	<p>Many cats move through my property on a regular basis. They defecate on fresh soil, catch numerous birds and have fights at odd hours.</p> <p>They need to be kept inside at night.</p> <p>There should be a limit on the number allowed in suburbia.</p>
53	No	My cats haven't caught birds. It's a great experience for children to watch cats have a litter. They have only ever caught baby birds fallen out of nests and the odd mouse. Two had one lot of kittens and were then spayed.
54	Yes	
55	Yes	All cats should be housed indoors from 9pm to 6am to prevent faeces being deposited in neighbourhood gardens overnight.
56	Yes	
57	Yes	
58	Yes	<p>This seems like good commonsense action to reduce unwanted feral cat populations and protect native birds and other animals from domestic cat predation.</p> <p>The only modification I might suggest is some sort of exception to desexing for registered responsible breeders.</p>
59	Yes	
60	Yes	
61	Yes	We need to keep cats and our environment safe, and this bylaw is a huge step in the right direction!
62	Yes	
63	Yes	Microchipping and desexing are the best way to control cat numbers and avoid the annual flood of unwanted kittens dealt with by SPCA and pet rescue organisations. I fully support making microchipping and desexing compulsory. That said, the cost of desexing can be prohibitive, so it may be prudent for Council to come to some arrangement with the SPCA and/or local veterinarian practices for discounted fees for the service.
64	Yes	This is long overdue. But it's not going to solve the feral cat problem which is way out of control New Zealand wide.
65	Yes	I'm in support of microchipping and registration, but the mandatory desexing at six months is taking it too far. What if the owner wants to breed from their cat?

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66	Yes	I used to live up the Maitai where unwanted cats were dumped when people went on holiday, and became feral and ate birds and wildlife to survive. So YES to microchipping, registration and desexing. If you cannot afford it then do not have a cat or a dog. They are expensive to look after medically and to feed.
67	Yes	This is a good first step to limiting the effect that cats have on native wildlife, not just birds, but reptiles and invertebrates as well. When domestic pets can be identified it will be easier to put in an effective programme to control feral cats. I hope that in the future regulations to control domestic cats will be similar to those for dogs.
68	No	1.5 years ago I adopted a rescue kitten and had her desexed at 5 months, along with chipped and registered. It's the responsible thing to do. I know how much effort and heartache the rescuers go through to save these wildlings and find them loving homes so if we can encourage (obligate) cat owners to be responsible we can hopefully lower the litter rate and their abandonment.
69	Yes	
70	Yes	
71	Yes	
72	No	Council will mismanage this (like other issues).
73	Yes	
74	No	This bylaw is not needed and will have no noticeable effect. Already according to the SPCA 88% of cat owners have their cats desexed. That leaves 12% who do not. The Council is therefore taking a sledgehammer to crack a nut. The 12% don't care, and they are irresponsible – so why does the Council think the Bylaw will have any effect on their behaviour? It won't. They will not be the kind of people who will pay fines. So once again the majority of law-abiding people of Nelson are brought under a Bylaw that they don't need. It just creates animosity. And how will the Council police the Bylaw, are you going to be sending cat inspectors to people's houses? How will it work or not work in practice when it comes to implementation? The Bylaw is badly thought out and will have minimal if any effect. A much better approach would be education. I might be biased as a College teacher but you don't get good behaviour or behaviour change by threatening people, in this case introducing a Bylaw, you get it by educating them, by showing them why they should get their cats desexed and perhaps in this scenario, also offering financial support. The SPCA also notes in its report that in some Australian States where this law has been in existence for up to 20 years, there is no discernible effect. Why is the Council ignoring this information?
75	No	
76	Yes	I am surrounded by seven properties, each of which has a cat. They repeatedly poo in my garden and vegetable patch. This is disgusting, upsetting, and a health hazard. Therefore, I would like the Bylaw to become COMPULSORY a.s.a.p.

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77	Yes	This is a great step forward in control for feral cats, in particular.
78	Yes	This is a good start but does not go far enough. A chip will not stop a cat wandering, will not stop them digging up seedlings and will not stop them from doing their business in the garden. As a non-cat owner, I don't feel I should have to put up with this. Can wandering cats be put in a cat pound and the owners fined?
79	Yes	There is currently a very serious issue with feral cats here in New Zealand, and this issue is only now beginning to get attention. One of the major drivers of this is that cat owners are in no way held responsible for looking after their pets. This is one way to ensure that cats are well looked after, there is not the continued rampant breeding which overflows to feral cat issues and begins to put in place some form of control, responsibility and recourse to encourage responsible cat ownership. This will only be adhered to if there are ways to enforce these rules.
80	Yes	I have three cats next door which roam the hill on our property killing numerous birds including a kingfisher. I was told they are "outdoor cats". We don't have any bird song in our area which is supposedly a NCC Halo area.
81	Yes	
82	Yes	As a practising Veterinarian I fully support the proposed bylaw as I believe it helps uphold animal welfare standards. Microchips can be used to identify lost or injured animals and immediately contact owners. Desexing markedly reduces a cat's roaming distance and therefore spread of infectious diseases like FIV (cat aids) and Cat Flu as well as reducing the chance animals will be hit by a car.
83	No	Council should be focusing on more important matters.
84	Yes	I am aware that even though a cat may be desexed and microchipped, if permitted by its owner to wander, it is still likely to be a threat to birds and other small wildlife. Council may wish to consider this in formulating the final policy.
85	Yes	A limit to the number of cats at any particular dwelling should be limited to three unless there is a good reason, e.g. a litter being fostered prior to being rehomed by the SPCA, and for cat breeders.
86	Yes	I believe this is a great idea and long overdue, but will registered cat breeders be able to apply for exemptions?
87	Yes	
88	Yes	I am not anti-cats, but they need to be controlled in some way, and this is an appropriate way to control them. Cats need some controls as they greatly affect the bird life in the community. It is impossible to control fertile cats in the community in any other way. This leads to countless feral cats. I am lucky enough to live on a 5000 sqm section. We have many cats roaming the section and some are feral. In the last 12 months we have had three litters by feral cats on our section. The subsequent kittens are now roaming and will drop litters in the next months. This needs to be stopped.
89	No	This just seems like yet another Council revenue gathering exercise. It is a ridiculous idea. How on earth can it be policed?

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		The honest cat owners will end up subsidising the useless pet owners, just as it is with dogs. Mandatory desexing should definitely NOT happen. Encouraging desexing possibly by subsidising the cost, would be the way to go.
90	Yes	
91	Yes	I would also support the containment of domestic cats to the owner's property, no more free roaming.
92	Yes	
93	Yes	Protect the native birds
94	Yes	<p>Cats are predators of our native birds. Feral cats are becoming our number one predator. When Great Mercury Island was cleared of predators a number of years ago, it was found that feral cats were by far the main predators.</p> <p>Also, as a home gardener I have to put up with the stench of cat faeces in my garden constantly. This is also a health hazard and can cause toxoplasmosis.</p>
95	No	I do not agree with compulsory desexing.
96	Yes	
97	Yes	<p>Microchip registration would make it easier to find owners of roaming cats and to identify feral cats. Feral cats are responsible for killing many birds and I think they should be classed as a pest species. By eliminating feral cats many of our native birds would have a greater chance of survival.</p> <p>I would like to see a limit on the number of cats each household can have – I would support each household having a maximum of two adult cats.</p>
98	Yes	<p>We need a cat bylaw to help shift public attitudes towards cat ownership, so that owners recognise the impacts that their cats can have and better manage them.</p> <p>Forest & Bird support the creation of a cat management bylaw for the reasons discussed in the consultation document. We particularly support measures to reduce the number of cats becoming feral through desexing; and enabling the identification of owned cats versus unowned cats via microchipping and registration. These measures are important for the implementation of the regional pest management strategy.</p> <p>Transition period – While we acknowledge the need for a transition period, we believe the period could be a year shorter and made June 1, 2026.</p> <p>Cat numbers per household – Forest & Bird would like to see the addition of a limit placed on the number of cats owned per household to prevent situations where a person has too many cats to adequately manage. Eighteen other councils currently place a limit on the number of cats with an average limit of three cats per household.</p> <p>Biodiversity – The rationale for a bylaw to protect biodiversity is two-fold. First, domestic cats kill an exceedingly large number of native birds, lizards and invertebrates. A recent</p>

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		<p>study in Dunedin showed that “predation by domestic cats dramatically reduced the population persistence” in native bird species.</p> <p>Second, microchipping of domestic cats would enable more effective control of feral cats through owned cats being easier to identify when caught in live capture traps.</p> <p>Cats have certainly contributed to the extinction of at least 11 bird species in New Zealand and have possibly contributed to the extinction of another 10 species.</p> <p>An additional reason why we need to control cats to protect wildlife is the impact of cumulative pressures on native wildlife. Nelson’s shorebirds are impacted by predation from introduced mammals (including cats), disturbance from people, dogs and vehicles, losing nesting sites to introduced weed species, and increasingly facing pressure from our changing climate which impacts upon food availability and habitat. We need to do what we can to alleviate these pressures.</p> <p>Toxoplasmosis – Cats are the only animal in which the parasite <i>Toxoplasma gondii</i> can sexually reproduce. The parasite creates oocysts (eggs) in the guts of cats that is spread into the environment via cat faeces where the eggs can survive for many months. Rainwater and run-off transport the oocysts into streams, rivers and stormwater drains as well as wastewater when cat faeces or kitty litter has been flushed down the toilet. Cats can transmit the parasite <i>Toxoplasma gondii</i> to sheep, humans and native wildlife.</p> <p>Public nuisance – Many Forest & Bird members are cat owners and yet many members are unhappy about owned cats intruding onto their private property and killing birds and lizards or defecating in gardens, which creates a public health issue.</p> <p>Public reserves – They are also unhappy about owned cats intruding into public reserves and conservation sites adjoining residential areas and preying upon native wildlife that numerous community conservation projects are working hard to protect.</p>
99	-	
100	Yes	<p>I personally feel letting cats wander outside is irresponsible for the environment and the cats themselves, and we don't allow such lack of control for any other pet. My cats remain indoors and cats are perfectly happy to be inside animals as they are extremely adaptive (eg. ships' cats!).</p> <p>Please introduce cat management bylaws and support the national effort to control pests in NZ.</p>
101	Yes	<p>We want cats to live long and happy lives, and we also want the same for our native birds and other animals. Responsible pet ownership is about all animals.</p> <p>Biodiversity – There is a tension between nature restoration work and the wellbeing of pet cats are both important</p>

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	<p>companion animals and introduced predators that have a significant impact on our native species. A balance needs to be found. Tasman Environmental Trust (TET) has run successful community engagement around feral cat control in special wildlife zones such as Pearl Creek on the Waimeha Inlet. Working together with community, council and SPCA has been the key to success and good animal welfare. The proposed measures would help protect owned cats as well as increase our capacity to protect our taonga species.</p> <p>We propose an increase in special wildlife zones and conservation projects identified with the ability to put extra measures in place. Areas surrounding whio, banded rail, kea conservation sites and other areas where there are especially vulnerable species would be good examples. Tackling-the-feral-cats-preying-on-endangered-kea "https://www.stuff.co.nz/environment/127081342/tackling-the-feral-cats-preying-on-endangered-kea"</p> <p>Toxoplasmosis – Cats are also the primary host of toxoplasmosis which can impact human health especially during pregnancy, as well as farmers’ sheep.</p> <p>Microchipping – Microchipping and registration are important ways to identify a cat as being owned. This ensures that cats can be returned to their owner when they are lost or injured. It also enables clear identification of an owned cat when cat control is being undertaken in areas that are close to populated areas where cats may live.</p> <p>In the Nelson Tasman RPMP feral cats are declared a site led pest in specific areas. Microchipping of owned cats would make it easier to undertake feral cat control in these areas while keeping owned companion cats safe from harm.</p> <p>Desexing – Desexing of cats ensures that cats are not having unwanted litters of kittens or breeding with local stray or feral cats. This keeps domestic cats safer with less tendency to roam and reduces interaction with unowned cats.</p> <p>Numbers of cats – We recommend that the NCC include a limit on the number of cats (with exceptions for breeders). This has been adopted successfully in other regions and reduces the incidence of cat colonies.</p> <p>Snip and Chip campaigns – Phasing in of microchipping, registration and desexing gives people time to get on board. Successful “snip and chip” campaigns used in other regions to help support people to undertake the necessary actions can be a roadmap for us to follow.</p> <p>Feeding stray cats – We support the addition of restrictions around feeding stray cats on public land, or private land without the express permission of the landowner, to avoid cat colonies. When this occurs, the cats are often unhealthy, malnourished and not desexed, leading to problems with local owned cats.</p>
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		<p>National legislation – TET support the NCC to advocate for national legislation around cat management to ensure there is a consistency of approach across the country. We support awareness and engagement campaigns around good cat care and management to protect both our furry friends and out taonga species.</p> <p>https://www.tet.org.nz/conservation-hub/useful-resources</p>
102	Yes	
103	Yes	<p>It is very frustrating to plant and enhance my property to attract native birds and skinks only to be plagued by cats. I have seen two skinks, one of which was in a cat's mouth. While weka have previously been frequent visitors, even successfully nesting, they sadly seem to be on the decline. Any decrease in cat numbers is welcome.</p>
104	Yes	
105	Yes	<p>The Predator Free New Zealand Trust would like to commend the Nelson City Council for the draft Cat Management Bylaw. The creation of this bylaw will help set clear expectations of responsible cat ownership and enable better management of owned and unowned cats in the region.</p> <p>Biodiversity – Cats are both important companion animals and introduced predators that have a significant impact on our native species. Cats are an apex-predator in New Zealand; they are highly skilled hunters (regardless of ownership status) that have the ability to devastate bird, bat, lizard and invertebrate populations. Without control measures cats are the biggest threat to predator control undertaken by council and community groups.</p> <p>Toxoplasmosis – Cats are the primary host for Toxoplasmosis Gondii, meaning it can only reproduce in cats. Toxoplasmosis is a major production pest, causing miscarriage and stillborn foetuses in sheep. Many farmers immunise against toxoplasmosis but the immunisation is not 100% effective and toxo "storms" can still go through flocks of sheep like this example earlier this year https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/farming/133152303/toxoplasmosis-wipesout12k-of-lambs-bringing-cat-control-issues-to-the-fore">https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/farming/133152303/toxoplasmosis-wipesout12k-of-lambs-bringing-cat-control-issues-to-the-fore. Humans also contract toxoplasmosis which causes miscarriages in pregnant women and illness in non-pregnant people. Toxoplasmosis also affects Maui and Hector's dolphins, kākā, kea and other native wildlife.</p> <p>Public support – In a 2024 survey representative of New Zealanders, the Predator Free Trust found that 66% of cat owners consider microchipping an essential part of responsible cat ownership and 79% of cat owners consider desexing important, non-cat owners were also strongly supportive. (Full report here, see page 30: https://predatorfreenz.org/wpcontent/uploads/2024/06/PFNZ_Final-debrief</p>

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	<p>_2024.pdf)</p> <p>Approximately 25 other councils already have measures in their bylaws to set clear expectations around cats (approximately 25 local authorities).</p> <p>Compulsory desexing of cats is important as it ensures that cats are not having unwanted litters of kittens or breeding with local stray or feral cats.</p> <p>Microchipping and registration is an important way to identify a cat as being owned. This ensures that cats can be returned to their owner when they are lost or injured. It also enables clear identification of an owned cat when cat control is being undertaken in areas that are close to populated areas.</p> <p>Feral cats – Microchipping of owned cats would make it easier to undertake feral cat control in areas near human habitation, while keeping owned companion cats safe from harm. The Trust recommends that when the local Regional Pest Management Plan is being reviewed the definition of feral cats is further clarified by including cats without a microchip.</p> <p>Transition period – We notice that you have proposed a phasing in approach for existing cats, giving cat owners until 1 June 2027 to microchip and desex their cats. This seems like a particularly long period of time 2.5 years and we encourage you to review whether such a long lead time is needed. 1 June 2026 seems like it would be adequate notice for people with existing cats. We also suggest that there is a clear expectation that once this bylaw comes into effect any cats born after that date are expected to be microchipped and desexed immediately.</p> <p>Public communications – We also recommend that you run an education and awareness campaign. In other areas they have run “snip and chip” campaigns to support people to undertake the necessary actions, these have been very successful. Many councils have done this well, and would be willing to share their experience and learnings of this process.</p> <p>Cat numbers per household – Limiting the number of cats per household is also an important provision for managing cat nuisance in areas. Approximately 22 councils around the country have limits on the number of cats per household and it is an important inclusion to manage overpopulation of cats in an area. There are also public health issues for owners and neighbours of households with a number of cats. We’d recommend introducing a limit of 2 cats per household.</p> <p>Feeding stray cats – Restrictions around feeding stray cats on public land would also be an important addition to the Cat Management Bylaw. This means that the feeding of unowned cats cannot occur on Council land or without the express permission of the landowner. In some areas this is a significant problem with a number of cat colonies being fed in public areas. These cats are often unhealthy, malnourished and not</p>
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		<p>desexed, leading to problems with local owned cats. We suggest the Council also considers the addition of a rule restricting the feeding of cats on public land, or private land without the express permission of the landowner.</p> <p>National legislation – Finally, we encourage the NCC to advocate for national legislation around cat management to ensure there is a consistency of approach across the country.</p>
106	Yes	I would appreciate the Council implementing additional cat management strategies such as containment.
107	Yes	Please also introduce other cat management bylaws, e.g. cat curfew or containment
108	Yes	It also needs to go further (e.g. cat containment) to properly manage the impacts of cats.
109	Yes	The bylaw is essential if we are to have birds as well as cats.
110	Yes	
111	Yes	The three-year lead-in period for existing cat owners is too lenient. The net result of this timeframe means more dead wildlife, especially native birds. A one-year lead-in period is more appropriate and effective, as human nature will dictate that the majority of cat owners will leave taking the required action until the last month or two before the Bylaw comes into force. This issue is currently very topical, the killing of native wildlife continues unabated, and the time to be strong and decisive is now. Therefore, please change the terms of enforcement to one year.
112	Yes	
113	Yes	I am in favour of anything we can do to prevent damage to native wildlife from both cats and dogs, and to keep the pet population under control.
114	Yes	<p>Native wildlife needs all the help it can get. Most cats with owners have already desexed and microchipped their cats so there shouldn't be any issues.</p> <p>NCC manages such large areas of open space that tackling wild cat populations could make a huge dent in introduced predator populations.</p> <p>I would be wary of increases in rodent populations though with an apex predator vanquished from the landscape. This should be addressed simultaneously with any control measures taken.</p>
115	Yes	
116	Yes	
117	Yes	As well as supporting the Cat Management Plan, I would like to see an amendment to that law, that all cats are kept within their property boundary, with a lead in period of three years to allow people to make the necessary changes to their properties.
118	Yes	
119	Yes	
120	Yes	
121	Yes	
122	Yes	
123	Yes	
124	Yes	

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125	Yes	<p>I live in the Marsden Valley area. In the last seven years with the expansion of housing up Marsden Valley, there has been a substantial increase of cats and dogs in the area. Correspondingly, there has been a decrease in the number of weka. In fact, I have not seen a weka in our subdivision in the last 12 months. We used to have weka families visit us daily. Anything to regulate and control the potential for unwanted cats would therefore be welcome.</p> <p>The Marsden Trapping Group is also very much aware of feral and dumped cats in the bush. Again, any measures to potentially reduce the number of these unwanted cats is welcome and long overdue.</p> <p>Personally, I would like the bylaw to go further to require that cats, like dogs, be contained to their owner's property.</p> <p>I and a neighbour have almost daily issues with cats toileting in our gardens. We have invested in cat deterrents (non-harmful deterrents) with only limited success. Dealing with other people's cat faeces on an almost daily basis, is, however extremely annoying and frustrating. Greater regulation of cats to protect our native birdlife and health of our community cannot come soon enough.</p>
126	Yes	
127	Yes	<p>The Proposed Bylaw doesn't go far enough. It does not limit the range of cats to the owner's property, which is what the bylaw really needs to do.</p> <p>We have six stoat/rat traps on our property in an effort to bring back the native birdlife, but we constantly have neighbours' cats prowling our property, counteracting our conservation efforts. We should not have to put up with this, and neither should native wildlife in general be subject to predation by domestic cats.</p> <p>Microchipping and desexing will not stop this predation of our native wildlife by these animals for whom hunting is a natural instinct. So, I ask you to add a clause mandating that domestic cats be restricted to owners' properties.</p>
128	Yes	
129	Yes	
130	Yes	
131	Yes	
132	Yes	
133	Yes	
134	Yes	
135	Yes	
136	Yes	
137	Yes	
138	Yes	<p>My beef with cats is the number of feral cats in Nelson City adjacent bush valleys and hills. They are a major contribution to our native bird destruction. Desexing pet cats will help reduce this problem.</p>
139	Yes	

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140	No	<p>Microchipping – Owners can already chip and register their cats if they choose and this does not stop cats roaming. Privacy can be an issue with this for some. Brook Sanctuary has an excellent predator proof fence the community invested in to protect natives.</p> <p>Desexing – Given cost is usually the reason preventing desexing, this bylaw could make matters worse. Illegal dumping of cats and kittens could increase so owners don't get fined or their cats removed. Vets may be regarded as likely to report owners of entire or unchipped cats so medical treatment avoided for pets causing welfare issues.</p> <p>For low income citizens \$252 plus \$75 (for desexing, microchipping and registration) could be half their wages or all their benefit. Subsidised snip and chip campaigns need to be held in Nelson. Some have only been in Richmond which is too far for those without transport.</p> <p>Cat breeding to be allowed only by registered breeders promotes the commercialisation of pet cats, most professional breeders already sell kittens over \$1,000.00, this makes an expensive pet.</p>
141	Yes	<p>Change the age at which cats must be desexed from six months to four months to reduce the likelihood of breeding.</p> <p>In future, we see a need to introduce additional controls such as a restriction on the number of cats per owner/property, including restrictions on the physical space cats can occupy.</p>
142	Yes	<p>This bylaw will help to address the problems with the overpopulation of cats in New Zealand. Desexing companion cats helps reduce the number of unplanned litters of kittens that enter shelters and are euthanised.</p> <p>Age for desexing – change this requirement from six months to four months. Kittens can be safely desexed earlier than the traditional age of four to six months. SPCA regularly desexes kittens at the age of eight weeks. Early desexing does not adversely affect the physiological or behavioural development in cats; it is a faster procedure with a quicker recovery time for the kitten; and it reduces the likelihood of some cat behaviours such as spraying, straying and vocalising later in life.</p> <p>Age for microchipping – change this requirement from six months to four months to help ensure kittens benefit from having a registered microchip at a young age.</p> <p>Limit cat numbers per household – the limit should be set no lower than three cats per dwelling, with exemption criteria such as microchipping, desexing and keeping cats on the owner's property.</p> <p>Containment – SPCA advocates for cat owners to keep their cats at home (inside or confined to their property) and supports bylaws that facilitate this behaviour.</p>

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	<p>Cats can have positive welfare and their physical, health, behavioural, emotional and mental needs met whilst keeping them at home as indoor-only cats or with access to a secure outdoor enclosure or a garden with an escape-proof fence.</p> <p>Keeping cats at home can reduce the risk of welfare harm from disease, injury, fighting, vehicle accidents, and becoming lost – and help minimise their negative impact on people and animals in communities.</p> <p>Nuisance complaints – SPCA urges NCC to improve their tracking of nuisance associated with roaming cats, including property damage, spraying and defecating on neighbouring properties, and fighting with other cats, causing injuries that require veterinary treatment.</p> <p>SPCA is concerned that the true scale of nuisance related to un-desexed and roaming companion cats is not fully communicated to local councils. Our organisation regularly receives emails and calls from the public about cat nuisance, and about predation on native wildlife and spread of disease. We even have a website article offering advice and tips for keeping a cat out of your garden. However, these strategies place the onus of managing nuisance on those who do not own the cat. Our organisation advocates that preventing nuisance is the cat owner’s responsibility.</p> <p>Toxoplasmosis – Cats are the definitive host of toxoplasmosis, and exposure to cat faeces in soil, sandpits, litter beds and gardens is a risk factor for transmission of toxoplasmosis to people and other animals.</p> <p>Cost of desexing – SPCA is happy to work with NCC to help cat owners overcome the cost barriers to desexing and microchipping cats. We have included our Snip ‘n’ Chip Council Package with our submission which provides more detailed information about how we work with local councils to promote more responsible cat ownership.</p> <p>Welfare-related benefits of desexing cats – Desexing can reduce the risk of certain diseases, reduce the likelihood of roaming (which can increase risks of harm such as disease and infection, injury and becoming lost), and increase lifespan. Desexing can also prevent the mortality of unplanned kittens which is often overlooked as a welfare problem.</p>
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Nelson City Council

Cat Management Bylaw

596364813-11984

1. Title

1.1 The title of this bylaw is the Cat Management Bylaw.

2. Commencement

2.1 This bylaw comes into force on 19 December 2024.

3. Purpose and Application

3.1 The purpose of this bylaw is to regulate the keeping of cats within Nelson City.

3.2 This Bylaw shall apply to all cats within Nelson City.

4. Definitions and Interpretation

4.1 In this bylaw, unless the context otherwise requires:

Cat means a domestic animal of the species *Felis catus*, including both male and female cats, regardless of breed, kept as a pet, companion, or for other purposes.

Desexed means the surgical sterilisation of an animal, which involves the removal of reproductive organs to prevent breeding. In male cats, this is known as neutering, and in female cats, it is known as spaying.

Microchipped means a registered vet has implanted a small electronic device (microchip) under the skin of an animal, typically between the shoulder blades, that contains a unique identification number which can be read by a scanner. This number is linked to a registry containing information about the animal and its owner.

Nationally Recognised Cat Breeders Body means an organisation that is officially acknowledged at the national level for its role in promoting, regulating, and supporting the breeding of cats according to established standards. This body maintains records of registered breeders and ensures adherence to ethical breeding practices.

Nelson City means the territory contained within the City of Nelson as defined in Schedule 2 to the Local Government Act 2002.

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5. Cat Management Provisions

- 5.1 Any cat over six months of age must be:
- a. Microchipped and the cat’s microchip registered with the New Zealand Companion Animal Register; and
 - b. Desexed, unless:
 - i. the cat is kept for breeding purposes; and registered with a nationally recognised cat breeders body, or
 - ii. the owner provides a certificate from a registered veterinarian stating that the desexing of the cat will adversely affect its health and/or welfare.

Existing cat owners shall be granted a transition period from the commencement of this bylaw, during which they are required to desex, microchip and register any cats they already own. This transition period shall extend until June 1, 2026.

Adopted by Council: 5 December 2024

Publicly notified: 18 December 2024

Commencement: 19 December 2024

Review: 5 December 2029

Expiry: 5 December 2031

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