



16 March 2022

Ms Lisa Clack
 CEO
 Shire of Merredin
 PO Box 42
 Merredin, WA 6415

By email to: ceo@merredin.wa.gov.au

Dear Ms Clack,

I am sure you are acutely aware of the burden placed on Local Government due to deficient pet management by some owners. Failure to sterilise, microchip and register dogs and cats leads to poor welfare outcomes for the animals as well as increased workload and costs for councils when animals stray and otherwise cause a nuisance (i.e. roaming and fighting with other dogs, spraying/marketing their territory).

Our own work under the Animal Welfare indicates that pet owners who lack funds are most likely to fail to comply with these needs for their animals.

In light of these issues, and to support those with financial difficulties, RSPCA WA is launching a pilot Pet Sterilisation Program which offers reduced sterilisation costs, free microchipping and (where supported by the Local Government) lifetime pet registration for pet owners who hold a WA Seniors Card, Pensioner Concession Card or Health Care Card. With support from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, the program is part funded by the State Government and administered by RSPCA WA. Sterilisation and microchipping is carried out by veterinary practices with whom RSPCA WA is partnering to deliver these services to the community.

This innovative pilot program will:

- Help community members meet requirements to register and sterilise their pets.
- Support local veterinary businesses.
- Enable those experiencing financial hardship to better care for their pets.
- Assist cat owners to comply with the *Cat Act 2011*, which mandates that all cats over six months of age be sterilised, microchipped and registered with their local government.
- Assist dog owners to comply with sterilisation requirements introduced under the *Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming Bill 2021)*, at a reduced cost when the Bill becomes law.
- Reduce local government workload by reducing the number of unwanted litters and, consequently, the number of strays and incoming animals in local pounds

The Royal Society
 for the Prevention of
 Cruelty to Animals,
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I write to you today to seek a partnership with Shire of Merredin as part of this innovative pilot.

Given the social and economic benefits of the program, and to add further incentives to strengthen the program even further, I am seeking your support in the form of Shire of Merredin offering free lifetime registration to those pet owners who participate in the Pet Sterilisation Program.

It is anticipated that most of the program participants will be those who would ordinarily *not* consider getting their pets sterilised and registered, or those who are unaware of the need to do both. Therefore, increasing the number of pets which are sterilised and microchipped in Shire of Merredin will both benefit local residents, and reduce workload on your rangers and other related services.

I would be very interested in the opportunity to discuss this partnership with you and have requested the program coordinator, Emily Mostyn-Brown, contact your office to follow up on this correspondence. Alternatively, Emily can be contacted directly on 9209 9315 or by email emostynbrown@rspcawa.org.au

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ben Cave', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Ben Cave
Chief Executive Officer