

Tumut Shire Council - Review and comment on: NRC Pest Animal Review

The NRC Pest animal Management Draft has been Reviewed by Tumut Shire Council. For the most part, there are no issues with the 30 recommendations made. However, Two of these recommendations, are of specific interest to Tumut Shire Council.

The following comments have been reviewed by the Director of Development and Environment and approved for submission on behalf of Tumut Shire Council.

- **Recommendation 3.** Establishment of a Regional Pest Animal Management Committee under the LLS which will run parallel and complimentary to the already established Regional Weeds Committees.
- Participation in such a committee focused on regional passage of information and collation of information for assessment and action is a role the LLS is well suited to. The LLS has been the lead agency in combatting feral pest animals through its various DPI roles prior to amalgamation into the LLS.
- The local Government role on such a committee however; would be limited in that, this Council, and most Councils, deal with a limited amount of pest animal management related directly to Council Owned or managed properties. These are generally limited to such things as: rabbits in parks and cemeteries, foxes in town, dealing with European wasps in public areas, feral and nuisance cat management in urban and peri-urban areas. The broader scope of wild horses, feral pigs and goats in parks and private properties, is an issue in which council generally directs issues to the LLS already.
- An LCA role in this would likely be little more than passage of information and presentation of data relevant only to their specific area. An additional committee representation by the LCA would be an unreasonable drain on limited assets, particularly when the role of the LCA in this matter is so limited.
- **Recommendation 17:** Calls for legislative change to the Companion Animals Act and implementing plans to control cats. This will have potentially significant cost implications to Councils in the areas of administration, implementation and compliance enforcement. Specific items are:
 - Compulsory Desexing of Cats by the age of 4 months
 - Compulsory Breeder registration and compliance for anyone who has “entire cats”
 - Annual registration requirements for entire cats – currently registration is lifetime)
 - LCA to declare and enforce cat confinement areas

The recommendations regarding cats have administrative and enforcement implications beyond Council’s current ability to manage. The proposed changes will require additional funding, administrative management and enforcement capability.

If these changes are made to the Companion Animals Act, as proposed, new definitions of, feral cat, or straying/uncontrolled cat similar to those of dogs will have to be introduced, and any enforcement program will be very costly to Councils implement over at least the first five years of imposition.

There is also noted a concern regarding the three funding streams for the Biosecurity Act implementation. The proposed change is to the Companion Animals Act which is Council managed and funded for implementation and enforcement. The funding issues for this recommendation need to be thoroughly assessed.

If you have any comment or concerns or wish to discuss, please contact the person listed below, who did the full review of the document.

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