

DESEXING YOUR PET

LOOK AFTER your pet – get it desexed.

Every year, tens of thousands of unwanted kittens and puppies are put down or illegally dumped into the environment because a pet was not desexed. Be a responsible pet owner and desex your pet.

RESPONSIBLE OWNERSHIP

Golden Plains Shire encourages responsible pet ownership through desexing your pet. Cats and dogs are able to start their reproductive lives at a very young age, and throughout their lifetime can potentially deliver many litters of kittens or puppies.

Once the scent of a cat or dog on heat has been detected, pets that are not desexed will go to extraordinary lengths to mate, including jumping over fences and travelling considerable distances to find the source of the scent.

Pet owners must decide whether they would like their pet to be desexed or whether they prefer to leave it entire. Many pet owners who do not intend to allow their pet to breed have their pet permanently sterilised. In doing so, the owner no longer needs to take special precautionary steps to prevent their pet from mating.

WHY DESEX YOUR PET?

There are many good reasons to have your cat or dog desexed. The important thing to remember for those pet owners who choose not to have their pet desexed is that they must, as a consequence of this decision, fulfil extra obligations to ensure their pet does not have unwanted litters or impregnate other pets. You can keep your pet entire and still be a responsible pet owner, but it does require extra effort and commitment on your part.

Desexing helps to reduce the problem of unwanted puppies and kittens and can also result in positive behavioural advantages. A desexed pet may:

- Be less prone to wander
- Not mark its territory by 'spraying' in the house
- Be less likely to develop aggressive tendencies
- Not suffer sexual frustration related to pursuing another on heat, but not being able to reach her

OTHER ADVANTAGES OF DESEXING

Desexed animals are far less inclined to go wandering in search of a mate. Allowing your dog to wander could result in it getting lost, injured or impounded and lead to you incurring a fine.

Desexing eliminates the need to house female pets to protect them from keen males that are attracted by their scent if they are on heat.



By reducing the population of stray or unwanted dogs and cats you in turn reduce the damage these strays can do to our native flora and fauna.

You will not have the problem of having to find homes for unwanted or unexpected litters of puppies or kittens.

KITTENS AND PUPPIES

Think carefully before letting your female pet have a litter, as you are responsible for keeping the offspring until you find responsible owners for them. Puppies and kittens must not be dumped or left to fend for themselves.



WHAT'S INVOLVED IN DESEXING?

Pets of any age can be desexed, even as young as eight weeks. However, the most common age for desexing recommended by vets is between 3-6 months (before 'puberty').

The operation is undertaken by a vet and is a very straightforward procedure, causing minimal discomfort to your pet – most pets are fully recovered within twenty-four hours.

Discuss with your vet any questions about what is involved and how to care for your pet after the operation.

**SOME COMMON MYTHS****A desexed pet will become fat:**

Incorrect. Desexing your pet does not make it fat or lazy; only lack of exercise and too much food will do this.

Pets lose their personality after desexing:

False. Your pet will retain his or her own, very individual personality after the operation. The only 'character' change resulting from desexing may be that your pet calms down a little.

The operation is painful:

Pets will experience some tenderness in the affected area immediately after the operation. Your vet can advise you on caring for your pet after desexing. Most cats and dogs bounce back very quickly.

Females should have one litter first:

No. There is no benefit in letting your pet have a litter before she is spayed – it is actually better for her not to have a litter or

a period of being on heat before being spayed.

DUMPING UNWANTED LITTERS

Dumping puppies and kittens carries a penalty of up to \$6000 or 6 months imprisonment under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* (1986). Apart from being inhumane, these animals could add to the stray and feral cat or dog populations.

Dumped animals are more likely to die from starvation or disease. A more responsible course of action, if you are unable to find a caring home for an unwanted litter of puppies or kittens, is to have them put to sleep by a vet.

MORE INFORMATION

Further information is also available in Council's range of Responsible Pet Ownership Fact Sheets. These include:

- Dogs, Fences and Roaming
- Biting and Aggression
- Leashes and Exercise
- Registration and Identification
- Responsible Pet Ownership
- Barking Dogs
- Barking Solutions
- Litter
- Registration Fees & Fines

CONTACTING COUNCIL

If you require any further information, or would like a copy of one of Council's Responsible Pet Ownership Fact Sheets, visit either of Council's Customer Service Centres at:

- 68 Sussex Street, Linton or

- 2 Pope Street, Bannockburn or call

☎ 5220 7111 or

☎ 1300 36 30 36 (Toll Free within the Shire) or

Email enquiries@gplains.vic.gov.au

Website www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au



GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE