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HOW CAN THE PET INDUSTRY HELP GET EACH COMMUNITY TO A 90+% SAVE RATE?

1. Rehome desexed and microchipped animals on behalf of pounds and shelters instead of contributing to further breeding of animals.
2. Desex all kittens and cats prior to sale or transfer. 22% of owned cats have an unplanned litter before they are desexed. If you accept cats from accidental breeders to help them find homes, this can be a worthwhile community service provided the cats/ kittens are desexed before sale. The desexing costs can be built into the price of the kittens. *Note: When compared with the traditional desexing age of 6 months, no significant short or long term disadvantages from desexing kittens between 8-10 weeks have been found. Help organise desexing of the mother cat as well to prevent further unplanned litters.*
3. Support an even playing field i.e. a legislated requirement for all breeders and sellers in each state and territory to desex kittens prior to sale or transfer. 62% of cat advertisements on Gumtree are for free animals (and only 23% of dog advertisements). This leads to perpetuation of the problem of undesexed kittens being given away and then having unplanned litters because the owners believe they cannot afford to desex their cats or don't get around to it before 4 months of age.
4. Support Model Breeder Permit legislation in every state and territory Australia-wide. All breeders required to pay for a permit to cover cost of an independent inspection to demonstrate Standards in a Code of Practice.
5. Encourage your local Council to introduce a Cooperative Desexing Program, particularly for cats, www.g2z.org.au/co-operative-desexing-programs.html and publicise low-cost desexing availability. www.ndn.org.au
6. Promote better understanding of how microchips work i.e. owners microchip number must be on a microchip register, registered to the breeder who then transfers ownership to the new owners; owners must update their contact details whenever they change their phone number or move.
7. Promote lost pet recovery techniques. See resources at www.g2z.org.au - Lost Your Cat? Found a Cat? Lost Your Dog? Found a Dog? Brochures; electronic posters for anyone who loses or finds a cat or dog, so that multiple copies can be printed and distributed in letterboxes, local shops and lamp-posts.
8. DID YOU KNOW 75% OF CATS ARE FOUND WITHIN A 500 METRE RADIUS FROM THE POINT OF ESCAPE? Become an expert on how to find lost cats and how to find owners of found cats by learning what is inside these brochures and share this knowledge.
9. Provide information on and encourage cat owners to get cat safe fencing if they find it hard to keep their cats indoors e.g. www.oscillot.com.au or do-it-yourself inverted wire mesh attachments described in the Keeping Cats Safe booklet. www.awlqld.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/cat-safe-booklet.pdf
10. Provide information and encourage use of cat (and dog) tracking devices fitted to collars e.g. Petrek
11. Encourage people to adopt from shelters – let people know that only a small proportion of animals in shelters are there due to behaviour concerns and at least 90% of animals are rehomingable (AWLQ City of Gold Coast data 2017/18 – 95% of dogs and 93% of cats reclaimed or rehomed.)

BACKGROUND

AWLQ believes in working together to save more lives.

- a. In 2004, we liaised with all stakeholders to establish a stakeholder coalition in Queensland, including PIAA. Over the next 7 years greater understanding of the issues was achieved.
- b. The PIAA Qld representative was involved in the development of compulsory microchipping in Queensland in 2008 and model Breeder Permit legislation in the City of Gold Coast in 2010, which included a requirement to desex kittens prior to sale or transfer.
- c. In 2011, Getting to Zero www.g2z.org.au was established **to increase responsibility of all stakeholders for companion animals so that every community and municipality can achieve zero euthanasia of all healthy and treatable cats and dogs.**
- d. From 2014, AWLQ has worked with national stakeholders to come to consensus on what should be done to achieve national consistency in effective strategies for the management and welfare of domestic cats living in cities and towns in Australia. This resulted in the Australian Cat Action Plan www.g2z.org.au/national-cat-action-plan.html. This plan does not include feral cats (who live in remote areas with no dependence on humans, as management of these cats needs to be addressed in different ways.)
- e. More work needs to be done to ensure that all these initiatives are implemented and adhered to, and encouraged by all stakeholders. You are invited to the next **G2Z Summit** - 8th Summit - to be held 14-18th September 2019 on the Gold Coast to share and develop your contributions. Find out more at: www.g2z.org.au/events.html

LOOKING FORWARD

AWLQ looks forward to ongoing open and honest communication from those involved in the pet industry about what you are doing, or willing to do, with further ideas and suggestions welcome. ■



i. Chua D. The unwanted cat and dog problem in Australia, G2Z Summit Presentation 2013

ii. South Australian Dog and Cat Management Board, Cat Owners Survey 2014 www.dogandcatboard.com.au/media/W1siZiIsIjIwMTQvMDUvMjc0MDRlMjI0MTI0ODk0X0RDTUJlQ2F0X293bmVyc19zdXJ2ZXIifMjAxNF9yZXBvcnRlcmV2aXNlZC5wZG9iXV0vDCMB%20Cat%20owners%20survey%202014%20-%20report%20revised.pdf

iii. RSPCA Australia, Early Age Desexing of Dogs and Cats Research Report www.kb.rspca.org.au/afile/595/114/1/

iv. AWLQ Statistics www.awlqld.com.au/statistics