

# Legislation for Cat Owners in Tasmania



Tasmanian  
Cat  
Management  
Project

On 1 July 2012, the *Cat Management Act 2009* and the *Cat Management Regulations 2012* came into effect in Tasmania. Key objectives of the *Act* are to encourage responsible ownership and welfare of cats, provide for the effective management of cats, and reduce the impact of cats on Tasmania's unique environment.



## Tasmanian cat management laws – what do they mean for cat owners?

### Do I have to desex and microchip my cat?

Under the *Cat Management Act 2009*, a cat owner should ensure that their cat is desexed and microchipped by a veterinary surgeon from six months of age.

### Do I have to identify my cat with a collar?

It is not a legal requirement to identify your cat with a collar but if your cat spends time outside, it is recommended. A metal disk attached to the collar with a contact phone number will aid in the faster return of your cat should it become lost. A collar also indicates your cat is not a stray.

### What happens if I want to sell or give away my cat?

Any cat that is to be sold or given away must be at least eight weeks old, desexed and microchipped (unless a Care Agreement is in place), wormed and vaccinated prior to sale. In addition, written evidence of the results of a general health check must be provided by a veterinary surgeon. The only exception is if a vet certifies that microchipping and/or desexing may adversely affect the health and welfare of the cat. Registered breeders are exempted from the desexing provisions of the *Act*.

Please refer to our Desexing and Microchipping Your Cat information at [www.TassieCat.com](http://www.TassieCat.com)

### DID YOU KNOW?

Under the *Cat Management Act 2009* to sell a cat includes: trade, give away, take consideration for, transfer ownership of and offer for sale.

### Is there a limit on the number of cats I may keep on my property?

Currently there is no limit on the number of cats a person can keep at their property in Tasmania. However, the keeping of many cats on a property can create health and welfare problems for the occupants of the house, the local community and the cats. In addition, it can have a significant detrimental impact on local wildlife (through disease and predation).

For the benefit of your cat, the Australian Veterinary Association recommends no more than two cats in a household, and those cats are most likely to get along with one another if they are siblings from the same litter. Many cats don't get along with other cats and it can be very stressful for them living with other cats. This may result in inappropriate behaviours like not using the litter tray, toileting in inappropriate places, blood in the urine and difficulty toileting, hiding, fighting and other anxious behaviours.

Cat 'hoarding' is an identified mental health problem that exists in our community. It involves a person keeping a large number of cats and failing to care for them properly, while at the same time denying that the cats are not adequately cared for. Please contact your Council if you have concerns about a property with a large number of cats.

## What is a Care Agreement?

Under certain circumstances a Care Agreement can be signed by a new owner who is purchasing or receiving a cat that has not been microchipped and/or desexed. The Care Agreement commits the new owner to desexing and/or microchipping the cat and it is an offence under the Act not to comply with the Care Agreement.

## What if I want to breed from my cat?

Only registered breeders are permitted to breed cats in Tasmania. Registered breeders must be a member of a cat organisation or individuals can apply to the Secretary of the Department of Primary Industries Parks Water and Environment (DPIPWE) for registration as a breeder. Information about registering as a cat breeder with DPIPWE can be found on the DPIPWE website.

It is an offence to sell or give away a cat or kitten that is not microchipped and desexed.

**With so many unwanted cats and kittens surrendered and euthanased each year, why not consider adopting from a cat management facility instead?**

## Am I bound by law to confine my cat to my property?

There is no requirement in Tasmanian legislation to confine your cat. However, for the benefit of your cat, your neighbours and local wildlife it is strongly encouraged that you keep your cat confined to your house and yard. Cat owners have a responsibility to ensure their cat/s do not become a nuisance to their neighbours. If a neighbour's cat is becoming a regular nuisance, please consider discussing the problem with the cat's owner, as often they are unaware that there is a problem.

Under some circumstances cats found trespassing on private land and prohibited areas can be trapped, so it is in the best interests of your cat to keep it confined to your property.

## Can my cat be trapped if it wanders from my property?

The *Cat Management Act 2009* allows for all cats (with or without identification) to be trapped by land managers (such as Council or Parks & Wildlife Service) if they are found wandering in prohibited areas, including land reserved in National Parks and public, timber or forest reserves.

Trapping and other control measures may be undertaken by managers of these prohibited areas (such as Councils, Parks & Wildlife Service, Forestry Tasmania, Crown Land Services). Councils can also declare certain land as a cat prohibited or cat management area.

In addition, cats found on private land that is more than 1 km from a place of residence or rural land where livestock are grazed can be trapped and returned to the owner, taken to a cat management facility, or humanely destroyed.

## What happens if my cat ends up at a shelter or cat management facility?

Cats in the care of a cat management facility will be scanned for a microchip to establish ownership.

Cat management facilities are required to hold microchipped cats for at least five days and non-microchipped cats for three days, to provide cat owners with time to look for lost pets. After this time, the cat management facility may rehome, sell or euthanase the animal. Cat management facilities may charge for the boarding of the cat while it was in care.

## What should I do if I can't care for my cat?

Under the legislation it is an offence to abandon a cat. If you are unable to care for a cat, it can be sold or given away if it is at least eight weeks old, microchipped and desexed, vaccinated, wormed and has been checked by a vet; or it should be taken to a cat management facility for rehoming. You may also like to discuss the issue with your veterinarian.

There are three registered cat management facilities in Tasmania: Ten Lives, RSPCA and Just Cats.

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# Tasmanian cat management laws – what do they mean for stray or roaming cats?

## Can I trap or catch a stray or roaming cat?

The *Cat Management Act 2009* permits a person to trap, seize or humanely destroy a cat found on their land if they are the owner of rural land which is used for the purposes of livestock production; or if their private land is more than 1km from the nearest residence.

A person attempting to trap stray cats outside of these circumstances leaves themselves open to civil legal action if a cat is injured in the process of trapping.

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For more information visit: [www.tassiecat.com](http://www.tassiecat.com)

Thanks to Kingborough Council for their great information on Legislation for Cat Owners in Tasmania.

