



MEDIA RELEASE – 21 July 2017 – for immediate release

SPCA Otago in support of LGNZ remit on cat management legislation

A remit being presented by 7 local councils to Local Government NZ's AGM is supported by SPCA Otago. The remit seeks to improve the management of all cats in New Zealand. SPCA Otago encourages and supports the development of any national legislation that would help achieve this. The development of relevant, useful central legislation that enables local councils to work with local communities to find appropriate solutions to manage cats is long overdue, especially for organisations, such as SPCA Otago, that deal with unidentifiable, lost, or abandoned cats.

SPCA Otago encourages responsible cat ownership, which improves the lives and welfare of all cats. Responsible cat ownership includes microchipping and registration of that microchip on the New Zealand Companion Animal Register, appropriate health care and desexing, and better management of cats in ecologically sensitive areas, where there is vulnerable, native wildlife. Consideration of the impacts that cats have on local communities (i.e. straying, spraying, cat fights, defecating) is also supported. Managing these impacts should be part of being a responsible cat owner.

SPCA Otago is heartened by the remit being presented, supported by 7 councils – it is critical that this remit is supported in order to progress the conversation regarding cat management, and implement the legislative changes required that will enable better welfare for cats in New Zealand. Importantly, the placement of a registered microchip will allow for owned and managed stray cats to be identified, and returned to the appropriate person in charge. Currently only 2-3% of cats that end up in rescue centres, or shelters such as SPCA Otago, are returned, by virtue of being unidentifiable. Although many new forever homes are found, this is not an ideal outcome for cats, owners, and shelter staff who are at the coal face of this problem.

Other responsible cat ownership actions that supported by SPCA Otago include early age desexing, which prevents unwanted litters contributing to the cat overpopulation in New Zealand, and provision of appropriate physical, health and behavioural needs, including health checks, and vaccination, for the duration of every cat's life. Cats are sentient beings, meaning they experience both positive and negative emotions and feelings - their life-long health and welfare needs must be met.

New Zealand is a nation of cat lovers and the value of cat ownership to society cannot be understated. However, cats must be responsibly owned and central government legislation enacted to enable local government to work with cat lovers and communities to ensure the welfare of all cats, people, communities and our vulnerable native species, and ecosystems.

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About SPCA Otago:

Our legally registered name is Otago Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Inc., otherwise known as SPCA Otago (***please always order the wording as SPCA Otago and not Otago SPCA***).

We have been a voice for animal welfare in Otago since 1882 and with the help of our generous supporters we continue to work hard to improve the lives of animals today. We are one of 47 SPCA centres around New Zealand.

SPCA Otago’s mission is to encourage the humane treatment of all animals and to prevent cruelty being inflicted upon them. As a charity, SPCA Otago does not receive any funding from the New Zealand Government, despite being a law enforcement agency. As a result, the SPCA relies entirely on the generosity of the public to carry out its life-saving work. Donations are always appreciated.

The 5 pillars of the SPCA’s work:

Prevent Cruelty	Rescue Animals	Rehabilitate Animals	Shelter and Rehome	Seek Justice
We work with the community to prevent cruelty and encourage humane treatment of all animals	Our team rescues thousands of animals from harmful situations and investigates complaints about animal cruelty	We provide essential medical care and support to help every animal that comes to the SPCA	We provide a safe haven for animals; we give them love, care and protection until we can find them a home.	The SPCA is the only charity with the legal power to help animals in need and bring offenders to justice.