

# SPCA Submission

Submitted on 1 April 2021

## Whangārei District Council's Long Term Plan 2021-2031



# Executive Summary

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- > SPCA is committed to reducing the number of unwanted animals in Northland through Snip 'n' Chip campaigns.
- > The Snip 'n' Chip programme provides readily accessible low-cost desexing and microchipping (and microchip registration) for owned companion cats and dogs.
- > Desexing is a key component of responsible ownership yet a proportion of the owned companion animal population is not desexed.
- > One of the main barriers to desexing reported by owners of companion cats and dogs is cost.
- > SPCA supports the proposal in the Long Term Plan to continue investment in community funding and submits that a portion of this funding is allocated to supporting responsible pet ownership through a financial contribution to the Northland Snip 'n' Chip campaign over the following 10 years (2021-2031).

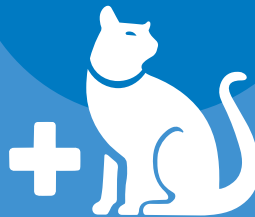


# The benefits of desexing your cat

**DECREASE**  
unwanted litters



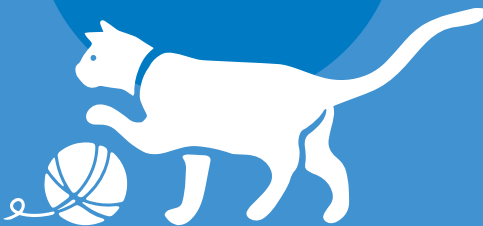
**INCREASE**  
lifespan by  
3-5 years



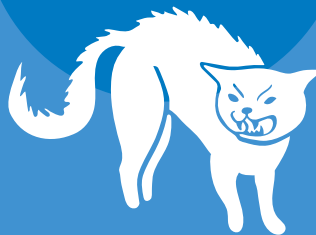
**REDUCE**  
spraying  
&  
marking



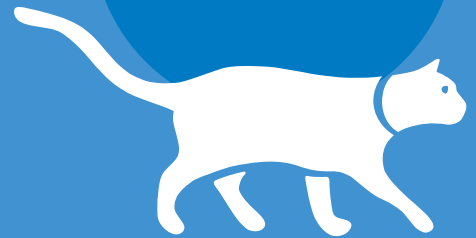
**LOWER**  
risk of cancer



**DECREASE**  
aggression

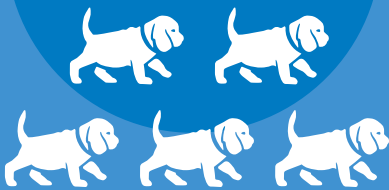


**REDUCE**  
roaming



# The benefits of desexing your dog

**PREVENT**  
unwanted litters



**LOWER**  
risk of cancer  
& infections



**INCREASE**  
lifespan by  
3-5 years



**INCREASES**  
**ACCESS**  
to daycares &  
kennels



**COST**  
**BENEFIT**  
for registration



**REDUCE**  
roaming



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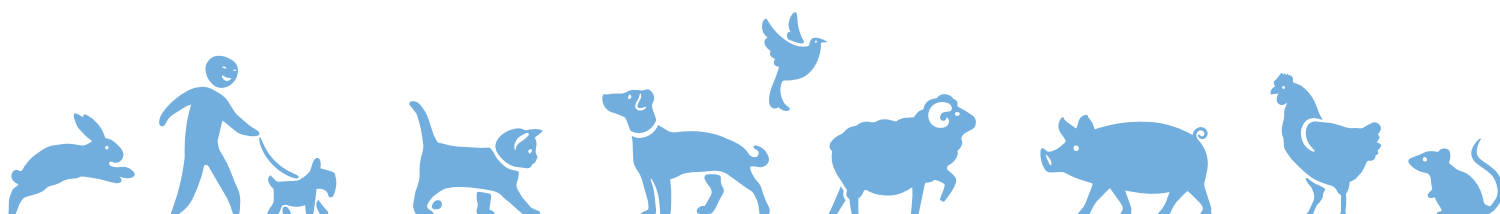
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# Introduction

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The following submission is made on behalf of The Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (trading as SPCA).

SPCA is the preeminent animal welfare and advocacy organisation in New Zealand. The Society has been in existence for over 140 years with a supporter base representing many tens of thousands of New Zealanders across the nation.

The organisation includes 35 Animal Welfare Centres across New Zealand and approximately 60 inspectors appointed under the Animal Welfare Act 1999.

SPCA welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on the Whangārei District Council's Long Term Plan 2021-2031.

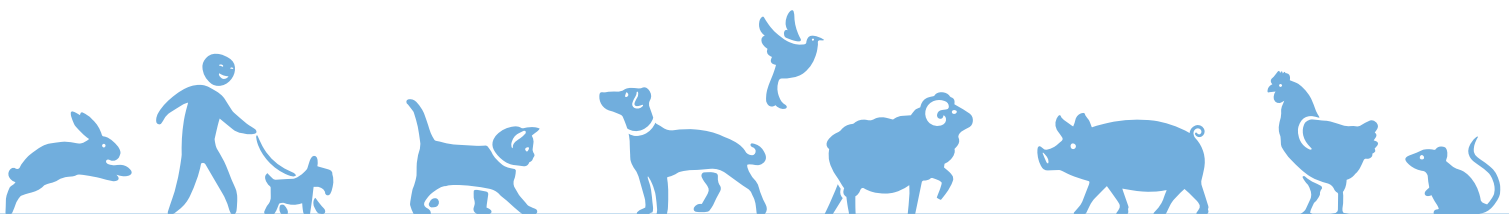
# Submission

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SPCA supports the proposal in the Long Term Plan to continue investment in community funding.

SPCA submits that a portion of this funding is allocated to supporting responsible pet ownership through a financial contribution to the cost of desexing and microchipping cats and dogs.

SPCA would welcome the opportunity to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Whangārei District Council (WDC) for a 10-year funding contribution to our national desexing programme (Snip'n'Chip). This programme provides readily accessible low-cost desexing and microchipping (and microchip registration) for owned companion cats and dogs.



# Background

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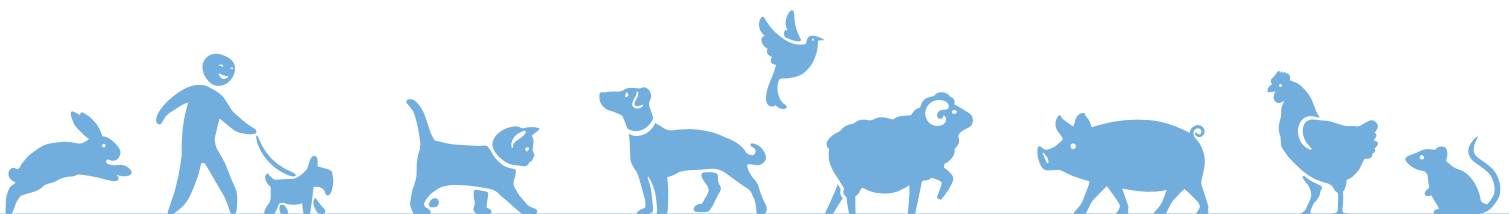
The owned companion animal population of New Zealand is estimated to include 1.2 million companion cats and 851,000 dogs.<sup>1</sup> Desexing is a key component of responsible ownership yet, 146,000 cats and 221,000 dogs are not desexed.<sup>1</sup> The main barriers to desexing reported by owners of companion cats are cost (27%), feeling it is unnecessary (23%), and not considering it a priority (21%).<sup>1</sup> For dogs, the three main barriers reported by owners are feeling it is unnecessary (27%), wanting to breed the animal (26%), and cost (20%).<sup>1</sup> These barriers have remained largely unchanged over the previous decade.<sup>2,3</sup>

The excessive (planned and indiscriminate) breeding of companion cats and dogs is an important contributor to New Zealand's widespread stray and unwanted animal populations. Stray cats are considered a pest under the Northland Regional Pest Management Plan. Their inclusion as a pest in this region signals increased pressure to reduce stray cat populations, including a need for increased desexing of companion cats.

SPCA has an important role in providing a preventative, 'top of the cliff' approach to addressing the unwanted and stray animal population of New Zealand. On average over 26,000 unwanted cats (72% of all incoming animals) and 4,500 dogs (15% of all incoming animals) end up in SPCA Centres per year. Snip'n'Chip provides a humane and effective way to reduce numbers of unwanted cats and dogs by assisting owners in overcoming the barrier of cost through the provision of subsidised desexing.

Increased rates of desexing of companion animals can reduce the flow or contribution of animals from the owned populations to the stray and unwanted population. This is an important aspect of humanely reducing the number of unwanted animals.

SPCA envisions a future where all animal lives matter in our communities and advocates that all cats and dogs are desexed, microchipped, and contained. Desexing of cats and dogs can ensure improved outcomes for the individual animal, and for our shared urban, rural, and wild spaces.



# The many benefits of desexing cats and dogs:

## Improved Animal Welfare Outcomes

Reduces relinquishment to shelters and subsequent euthanasia<sup>4-10</sup>

Decreases reproductive disease, including cancers, infections, and tumours<sup>5,11</sup>

Increases lifespan for both cats and dogs<sup>12</sup>

Improves animal behaviour: reduced hyperactivity, increased affectionate behaviour, reduced aggression (fighting), and reduced sexually motivated frustration<sup>11,13-16</sup>

Reduces problematic sexually motivated behaviours: roaming (risk of hit by car), urine marking, humping, and vocalising<sup>11,16-18</sup>

Facilitates access to doggy daycare, kennel, and cattery services<sup>18</sup>

## Improved Community Outcomes

Improves population control; there are fewer unwanted cats and dogs in the community<sup>19-21</sup>

Reduces nuisance behaviours: urine marking, fighting, roaming, fouling, and vocalisations can be detrimental to the relationship between animals and people within community settings<sup>11,1-18</sup>

Increases compliance with local-government registration (reduced fees for desexed dogs)<sup>19</sup>

Reduces risk of disease transmission to people and other animals (e.g. ringworm, FIV)<sup>22,23</sup>

Prevents dog bites; intact dogs are associated with increased risk of dog bites<sup>24</sup>

## Improved Agricultural Outcomes

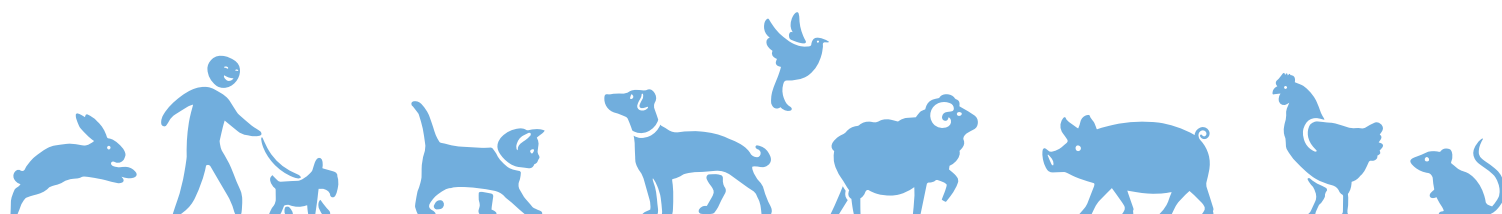
May reduce nuisance behaviours associated with roaming (e.g. worrying stock), which can be costly and detrimental to animal welfare and the relationship between animals and people within community settings<sup>25</sup>

Reduces risk of toxoplasmosis transmission to farmed animals<sup>26,27</sup>

## Improved Biodiversity Outcomes

Decreases predation pressure on native wildlife<sup>19,28-33</sup>

Decreases risk of toxoplasmosis transmission to native wildlife<sup>27</sup>





In December 2020, SPCA launched, in Northland, its largest stand-alone Snip'n'Chip campaign to date. The interest and uptake of this campaign has been phenomenal and we are on target to desex 4000 cats by the end of June 2021. This will greatly impact individual cats and their families. To continue making a sustained impact on reducing the number of unwanted animals in the Northland community this effort must be ongoing and expand to include dogs.

## Conclusion

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SPCA is committed to reducing the number of unwanted animals in Northland through Snip'n'Chip campaigns.

Our organisation would welcome the opportunity to discuss the development of a MOU with WDC outlining an annual financial contribution to the Northland Snip'n'Chip campaign over the following 10 years (2021-2031).

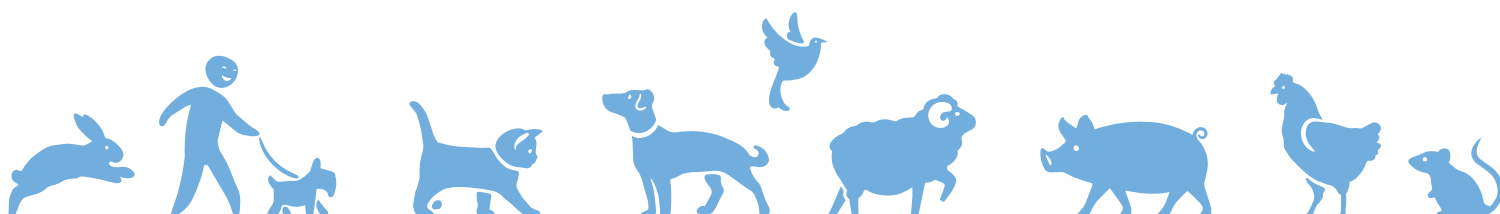
If invited, SPCA would welcome the opportunity to speak on this topic at the Council hearing scheduled for the 13th and 14th of April 2021.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Arnja Dale  
Chief Scientific Officer

SPCA NZ

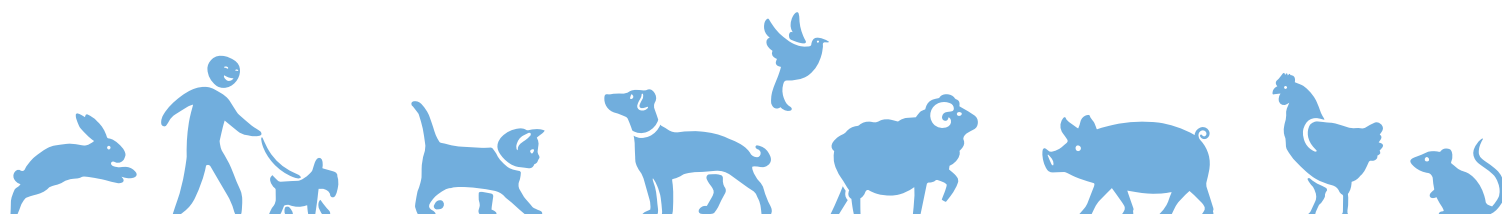
For more information please visit [www.spcan.z](http://www.spcan.z)



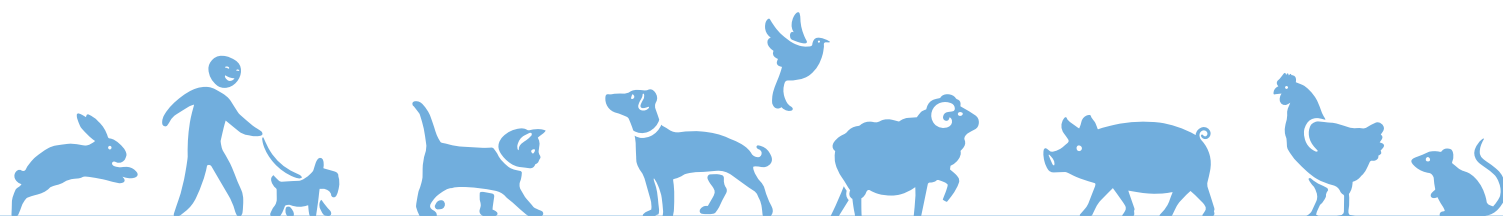
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