



POLICY

C035 Desexing Policy for Domestic Animals (Cats)

1 Purpose

This Policy establishes the approach to mandatory desexing for cats registered within Hindmarsh Shire to support responsible pet ownership, reduce overpopulation, and improve animal welfare outcomes, consistent with Council's Domestic Animal Management planning obligations.

This Policy gives effect to Council's powers under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994 (Vic)* to refuse registration or renewal of registration of cats unless they are desexed or exempt.

2 Scope

This Policy applies to:

- All cats required to be registered with Hindmarsh Shire Council (including renewals); and
- All Council staff administering animal registration, education, compliance and enforcement activities.

This Policy does not replace legislative requirements and should be read with the *Domestic Animals Act 1994 (Vic)* and associated regulations.

3 Exemptions

Council will recognise exemptions available under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994 (Vic)* where an animal is exempted from any requirement to be desexed.

Exemption requests must:

- be supported by evidence acceptable to Council (e.g., documentation consistent with the Act's exemption categories), and
- be recorded against the animal's registration record.

4 Definitions

Council means Hindmarsh Shire Council

Desexed	sterilised by a veterinary practitioner (e.g., spay/neuter) to prevent breeding.
Exempt	a cat exempted under the Act from any requirement to be desexed (e.g., categories provided under the Act).
Registered	recorded on Council's register of dogs and cats for the relevant registration period.

5 Policy

Hindmarsh Shire Council supports and promotes responsible pet ownership and will progressively implement mandatory desexing to be completed by 31 December 2027, consistent with Council's Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) 2026–2029.

Council will implement this Policy primarily through its statutory function of registration and renewal, using its power to refuse registration/renewal where an animal is not desexed and is not exempt, once the relevant commencement date is reached.

5.1 Implementation (Completion by 31 December 2027)

From 1 January 2028, Council will not register or renew the registration of a cat unless:

- the cat is desexed; or
- the cat is exempt under the Act.

Transitional period

From adoption of this Policy until 31 December 2027, Council will prioritise:

- community education and reminders,
- access to desexing support programs,
- incremental compliance checks at renewal time.

These measures align with the DAMP's focus on education, responsible ownership and managing overpopulation.

5.2 Evidence and Administration Requirements

For registration/renewal, owners must provide one or more of the following:

- veterinary certificate confirming desexing; or
- other documentary proof accepted by Council.

Where evidence is not provided at renewal:

- Council may issue a request for further information, and/or
- refuse registration/renewal once the relevant effective date has commenced, unless an exemption applies.

5.3 Compliance and Enforcement Approach

Council will adopt an approach that is:

- education-first during transition periods,
- proportionate, transparent, and consistent,
- focused on supporting compliance at registration/renewal time.

Council may undertake targeted education and compliance activities identified in the DAMP 2026–2029 to support responsible ownership with the aim to reduce overpopulation.

5.4 Equity and Access Measures

Council will actively seek to reduce barriers to compliance by:

- promoting low-cost desexing options and any subsidy programs available during the transition period (where funding permits), and
- partnering with veterinary providers, animal shelters, rescues, and welfare organisations where feasible.

5.5 Monitoring, Reporting and Review

Council will monitor:

- proportion of registered cats recorded as desexed,
- registration compliance rates,
- pound/impound trends and euthanasia/rehoming outcomes,
- community feedback and enforcement workload.

5.6 Council Resolution and Publication (Implementation Mechanism)

To implement mandatory desexing through registration/renewal, Council will prepare and adopt a Council resolution under s10A specifying:

- the relevant future date for cats

Council will ensure required publication occurs (including Government Gazette and a newspaper circulating in the district) and give effect to the resolution.

6 Policy Basis / Legislative Framework

This Policy is guided by:

- *Domestic Animals Act 1994 (Vic)*, including:
- Council's power to refuse to register/renew registration unless a cat is desexed (or exempt).
- Council obligations to prepare and implement a Domestic Animal Management Plan every four years (s68A).

This Policy aligns with Hindmarsh Shire Council Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026–2029 (Adopted 17 December 2025), including its focus on responsible pet ownership and managing overpopulation.

7 This Policy will be reviewed:

- annually until 2028 to support implementation, and
- thereafter aligned with Council's 4-year DAMP cycle required under the Act.

8 References

Related documents	Legislation
Hindmarsh Shire Council Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026–2029	<i>Domestic Animals Act 1994 (Vic)</i>
Hindmarsh Shire Municipal Local Law	<i>Domestic Animal Regulations 2015 (Vic)</i>

9 Document Control

Desexing Policy for Domestic Animals (Cats)		Policy Category	Council
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