



URBAN CAT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Adopted: 26 May 2021

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Introduction

Purpose of the Cat Management Plan

This document has been developed to provide a cat management plan that reduces cat related complaints in the community about behaviours such as roaming, soiling, noise and other nuisance behaviour.

The plan prescribes a comprehensive set of actions to address the core issue which is uncontrolled cat populations. This includes:

- Desexing;
- Education about containment and responsible pet ownership; and
- Identification and registration.

The plan also includes a framework to promote responsible pet ownership, educate the community and improve the welfare of humans and cats.



Definitions section

According to the RSPCA (2018) report titled “Identifying best practice cat management in Australia”, the following definitions should be used to categorise cats.

- **Domestic cats** are those with some dependence (direct or indirect) on humans and can be subcategorised as follows:
 - **Owned cats** are identified with and cared for by a specific person and are directly depending on humans. They are usually sociable although sociability varies.
 - **Semi-owned cats** are fed or provided with other care by people who do not consider they own them. They are of varying sociability with many socialised to humans and may be associated with one or more households.
 - **Un-owned cats** are indirectly depending on humans with some having casual and temporary interactions with humans. They are of varying sociability, including some who are unsocialised to humans, and may live in groups.
- **Feral cats** are unowned, unsocialised, have no relationship with or dependence on humans and reproduce in the wild. The Australian Government (2015) report “Threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats” provides similar definitions.
- In relation to policy on management of cats held in shelters and pounds, the term “no-kill” means that healthy and treatable animals are not killed. Under this policy, euthanasia of animals is acceptable where treatment would not be expected to give them a good quality of life, or for those cats considered dangerous to public safety.

Summary of Liverpool City Council's statutory compliance requirements

- Companion Animals Act 1998 (as revised in 2019) and Regulations:



- Cats must be microchipped by 12 weeks of age;
- Cats must be registered by 6 months of age;
- Annual permit is required after 4 months of age if not desexed;
- Cats can be seized if they cause injury to a person or another animal;
- Cats are free to roam except in prohibited areas, (wildlife protection areas, within 10 metres of public food preparation areas); and
- Minimum holding period in shelter is 7 days for unidentified cats and 14 days for identified cats.

- Council's Animal Management Plan:
 - No more than 4 cats to be kept at a premises.

Cat management services in Liverpool City Council

Liverpool Local Government Area

The Liverpool Local Government Area (LGA) consists of 42 suburbs and is one of the fastest growing regions in Sydney. It has a current population of 227,585 and land area of 30,552 ha (306km²).

The Liverpool LGA is experiencing substantial growth from urban release development and from redevelopment in established areas. Its population is expected to increase to more than 320,000 over the next 20 years.

Liverpool City is located in Sydney's south-western suburbs and is about 25 kilometres from the Sydney CBD. It contains the Western Sydney Airport which is currently under construction.

The Metro area (including residential, industrial and Holsworthy army barracks) is 17,744 ha (178 km²) with a population of 220,674.

The Rural area (Western Area) is 12,808 ha (128 km²) with a population of 6911.



Numbers of Companion Animals in Liverpool LGA (Companion Animals Register Period 2010-2020):

- Identified cats – 9730
- Registered cats – 3270
- **Total cats - 13,000**
- Identified dogs – 24,282
- Registered dogs – 11,574
- **Total dogs – 35,856**

Based on average statistics reported for Australia:

- 27% of households have 1.4 cats
- 40% of households have 1.3 dogs



In 2016 the City of Liverpool had 64,000 households

- Estimated owned cats = 24,000
- Estimated owned dogs = 33,000
- Estimated unowned/semi-owned cats = 10,000-20,000

There are 9 veterinary practices in Liverpool LGA.

There are 3 pet shops in Liverpool LGA (2 Petbarn and one independent pet shop).

Principles underpinning cat management by Liverpool City Council

- Council staff work within legal framework;
- People and pets live in harmony with each other;
- Animals are treated with respect and compassion;
- Improve the health and wellbeing of cats; and
- Recognise that cats are great pets and highly valued companions.

Current Liverpool City Council Animal Management Team

Animal management services are delivered through the Community Standards Department, which is part of Council's City Economy & Growth Directorate.

The equivalent of six effective full time (EFT) positions are dedicated to delivering animal management services.

The primary focus of the service is on:

- Re-uniting lost animals with their owners and rehoming unclaimed animals;
- Coordination of re-homing programs, including marketing and promotion (of available animals) and working with rescue groups;
- Attending to dogs and livestock that have escaped their property, with preference to returning pets to their rightful owner or, if required, transferring to the Liverpool Animal Shelter;
- Providing animal support and advice to the community;
- Educating the community on their responsibilities in owning companion animals and livestock;
- Enforcing state legislation and council policies relating to cats, dogs and livestock;
- Management of cat and dog registration through the NSW State Government Companion Animals Register and the collection of registration fees;
- Attending to complaints, investigation of incidents e.g. dog attacks, barking dogs, and attending court proceedings;
- Running desexing, microchipping and vaccinating events;
- Encouraging and promoting pet related opportunities for working with the RSPCA, AWL, Cat Protection Society, Department of Housing and other groups; and
- Patrolling of public areas and dog off-leash areas.



Strategic framework for cat management

Focus area one: service management and authorised officers

- Training and education:
 - Continue to offer training in implanting microchips in order to provide a free service to Liverpool City Council residents; and
 - Ensuring all officers have training to scan for a microchip.
- Building the team and potential for future hirings and secondments:
 - Employing or seconding a Community Liaison Officer to deal with preparation of desexing, microchipping and vaccination programs; and assist in resident participation in these programs.
- Setting cat management priorities relative to dog management:
 - Legislation and framework for dog management is under control but this is not so clear for cats as legislation is less stringent for cats. Therefore other priorities need to be developed for managing cats.
- Facilitating interactions with RSPCA, AVL and Cat Protection Society:
 - Develop a schedule for regular meetings about conducting desexing, vaccination and microchipping programs.

Focus area two: cat overpopulation and welfare of cats

- Current statistics from Liverpool City Council pound and the RSPCA:
 - 27 cats were impounded last year by Liverpool Animal Shelter;
 - All were dumped at the shelter or picked up by animal management officers;
 - None were seized after attacking someone;
 - 26 were rehomed and one reclaimed;
 - It took an average of 45 days to rehome a cat;
 - In 2018-2019, 659 cats from Liverpool City Council suburbs went to the RSPCA (see Appendix);
 - Of these, 69% were stray cats and 76% were kittens;
 - Out of these 659 cats, 5 were reclaimed (1.8%), 49% rehomed and 37% euthanased (50% of strays).

Potential solutions:

- Reducing cat abandonment at the shelter and surrenders to the RSPCA:
 - Identify and support pet owners who are struggling to provide care for their cat/s – this may include assistance with desexing, health care, provision of pet food/cat litter

- Identify and support people caring for undesexed cats, including those with with large numbers of cats – this may include free desexing, microchipping and assistance with registration costs
- Provide access to an animal behaviourist for owners who require assistance with cat management.
- Proposals for desexing programs:
 - Low-cost or free desexing subsidised by Liverpool City Council, provided as a general service across LCC;
 - Focus on desexing females that are producing unwanted litters;
 - Collaboration with RSPCA to identify people surrendering litters to RSPCA shelter, and ensure mother of these litters is also desexed;
 - Target people feeding multiple cats to ensure all cats are desexed and best practice colony management is followed, including early identification and desexing of immigrant cats.
 - Targeted campaigns to cover specific suburbs where there are large numbers of cats needing to be desexed;
 - Primary target for 2021 is the 2168 postcode, because of reports of large semi-owned/unowned cat populations;
 - Aim to achieve 30-50 cats desexed/1000 residents in target suburbs.
- Encouraging resident uptake of subsidised desexing programs:
 - Potential role of Community Liaison Officer for door knocking and follow-up in targeted areas;
 - Assisting with transport of cats to desexing site, catching the cat in a trap, medication administration; and
 - Promote availability of pensioner subsidy for desexing; and
 - Making desexing both affordable and accessible.
- Encouraging adoption and rehoming, particularly from shelters:
 - Social media;
 - Local cat rescue groups;
 - Promote home to home adoptions.



Focus area three: registration and identification

- Current statistics:
 - 4% cat reclaim rate from pound and RSPCA;
 - Very few cats have microchips; and
 - Of those that do have a microchip, 37% have the wrong contact details.
- Numbers of cats registered per 1000 residents is only 25% of that in Victoria.

Potential solutions:

- Reviewing administrative management of microchipping and registration:
 - Lobby State Government to combine/ streamline current complex and arduous process of microchip and registration.
- Maintaining accuracy of microchip contact information:
 - Animal management staff in the field will be encouraged to scan microchips and offer to update owner contact details;
 - Email reminders to owners to encourage them to update their details; and
 - Build database of owner phone numbers to send out reminder texts - include link to online system to make it easy for people to update their contact details.
- Articulating advantages of registration for owners:
- Acknowledge and address access and affordability issues:
 - Use of mobile “pop-up” microchip and vaccination vans.
- Reviewing and refining strategies for monitoring and enforcement.



Focus area four: dealing with nuisance issues and complaints

- Current level and nature of complaints:
 - 55 complaints per year.
 - Most common complaints are:
 - Cats roaming on a property and using garden as a toilet;
 - Someone feeding multiple cats (overwhelmed feeder).
- Where/who do most complaints come from (location of issues):
 - Some habitual complainers, some complaints about the same site from multiple different complainers;
 - People living in unit complexes (usually about a resident feeding cats) **50%**;
 - 80% of these complaints are from Department of Housing complexes;
 - People from a single house complaining about a cat on their property **50%**;

Potential solutions:

- Effective communication with complainants about options:
 - Explaining that cats are free to roam in NSW;
 - Most effective options include managing cat numbers, reducing number of entire cats, keeping cats contained at night, and providing information on strategies to keep cats off property.
- Cat curfews, containment:
 - Difficult and expensive to enforce, education is the key;
 - Containment at night is highest priority – distance travelled by a cat at night is double that during the day, and more fights occur at night resulting in higher risk of disease transmission and more complaints;
 - Educating owners on advantages of keeping cats indoors (especially at night) and strategies to achieve this, such as utilising strategic feeding times to facilitate night-time containment.
- Educating and liaising with colony feeders:
 - Help to organise desexing of their colony cats;
 - Encourage best practice feeding strategies (e.g. hide the food, don't feed more food than can be eaten in 30 minutes, remove uneaten food to avoid attracting vermin, remove/hide used feeding plates);
 - Ongoing management, watch for immigrant cats and manage as necessary.
- Deterring cats from property:
 - Availability of deterrent devices from council (e.g. rental service) – motion-triggered water sprays, etc.
 - Educating about other effective strategies (e.g. eggshells on garden beds).



Focus area five: pets and people

- Develop effective public education and advocacy strategies to promote responsible cat ownership:
 - Collaborate with council communications team for development and effective distribution of media/materials;
 - Distribute educational material particularly to areas where there are complaints (including CPS pamphlet on being a good neighbour); and
 - Advice on practical strategies that can be implemented.
- Dealing with people and cats in crisis (e.g. domestic violence situations, elderly moving to nursing homes/hospitals/dying, owners hospitalised, owners with short remand/incarceration periods):
 - Liaise with relevant organisations depending on the situation; and
 - Make the community aware of the other welfare groups and their services that are available in these situations.
- Managing animal abuse and cruelty issues:
 - These are usually referred to the RSPCA;
 - Important to recognise and nurture the relationship with the RSPCA.
- Building trust and better interactions with street cat rescue groups and colony feeders.

Consolidated Action Plan for 2021

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Employing/seconding a Community Liaison Officer for 12 months	Manager Community Standards and Coordinator Regulatory Services	By September 2021
Free Vaccination & Microchipping events	Community Liaison Officer	Quarterly
Responsible Cat Ownership Program	Communication Team and Community Liaison Officer	Commence September 2021
Desexing Subsidy	Communication Team and Community Liaison Officer	Commence September 2021
Free Microchipping Service	Rangers	As required
Free Desexing Program (Target 2168 Suburbs: Busby, Ashcroft, Miller, Cartwright, Heckenberg, Sadlier)	Community Liaison Officer	Commence November 2021
Lobbying State Government to combine microchipping/registration	Manager Community Standards and Coordinator Regulatory Services	Commence September 2021

Monitoring outcomes, evaluation

- Review action plan annually and report outcomes to Liverpool City Council.

Acknowledgements and References

Australian Pet Welfare Foundation:

Emeritus Professor Jacquie Rand

Emeritus Professor Helen Swarbrick

Emily Lancaster

Yarra Ranges Domestic Animal Management Plan

Greater Shepparton Domestic Animal Management

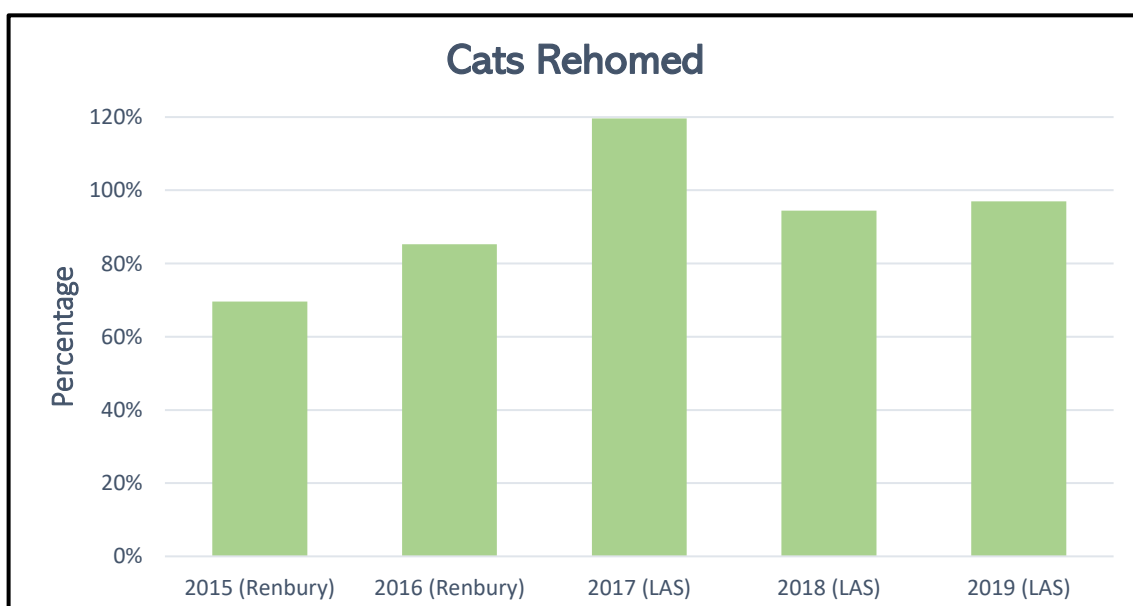
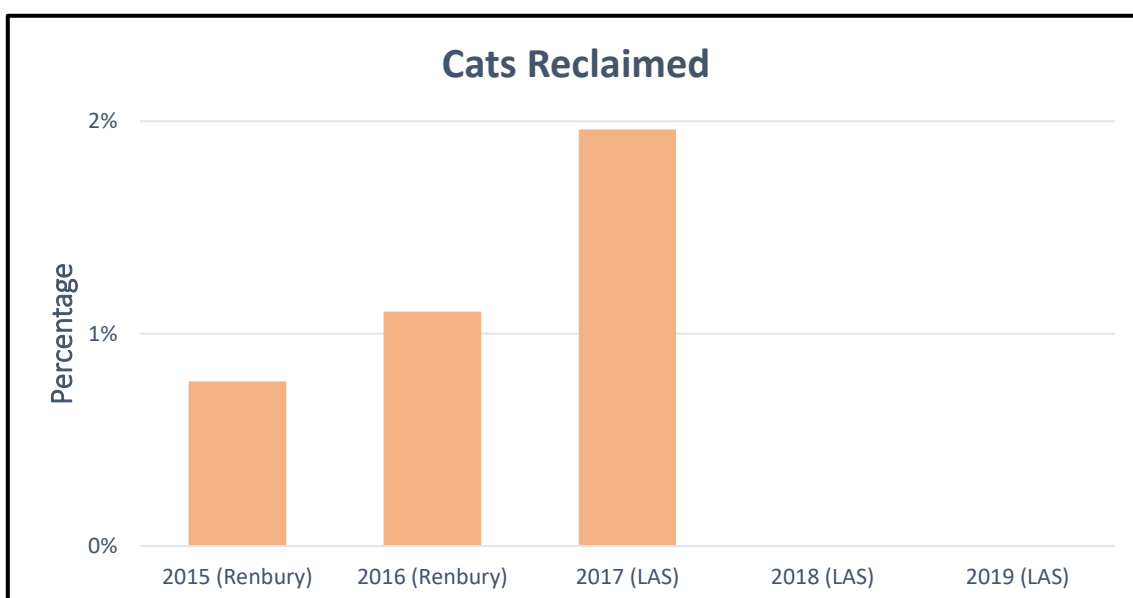
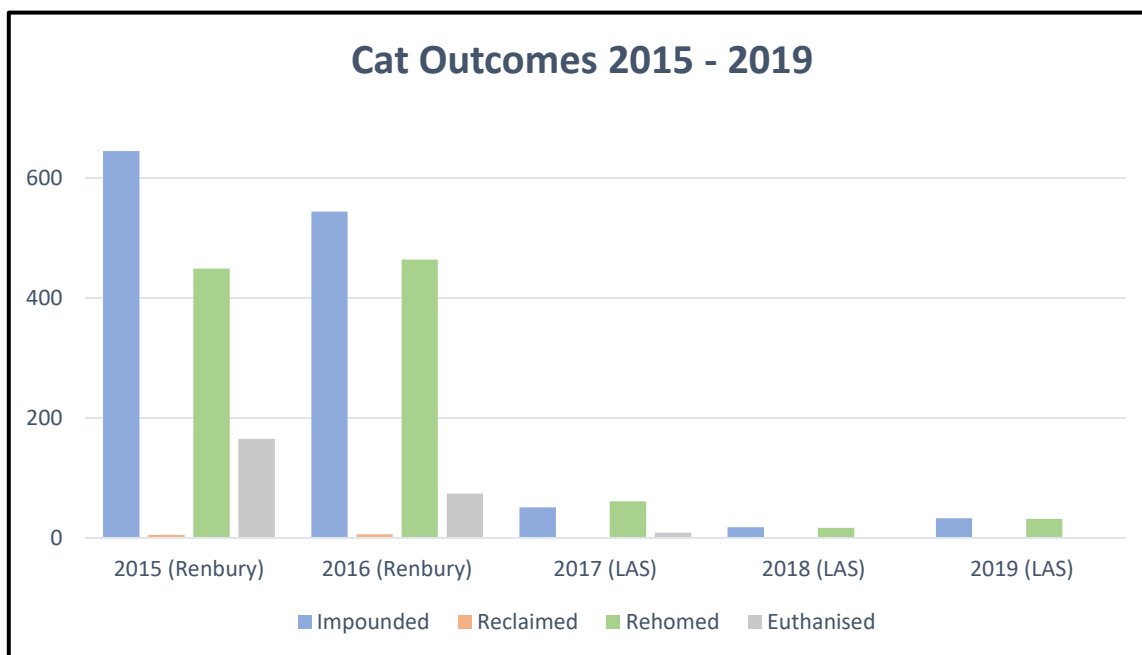
Marrondah City Council Draft Domestic Management Plan

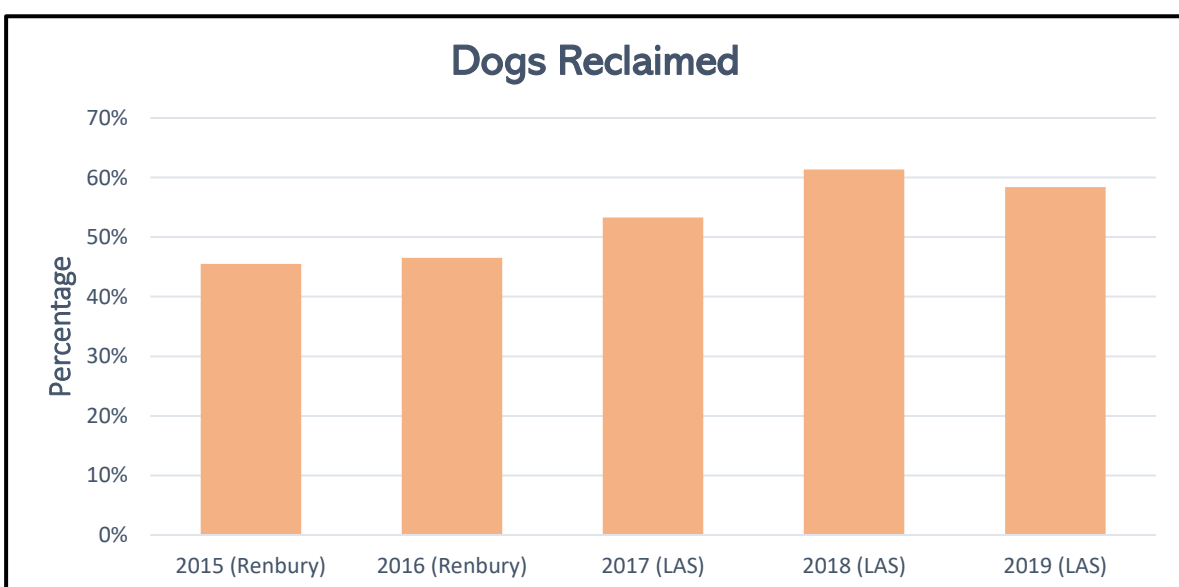
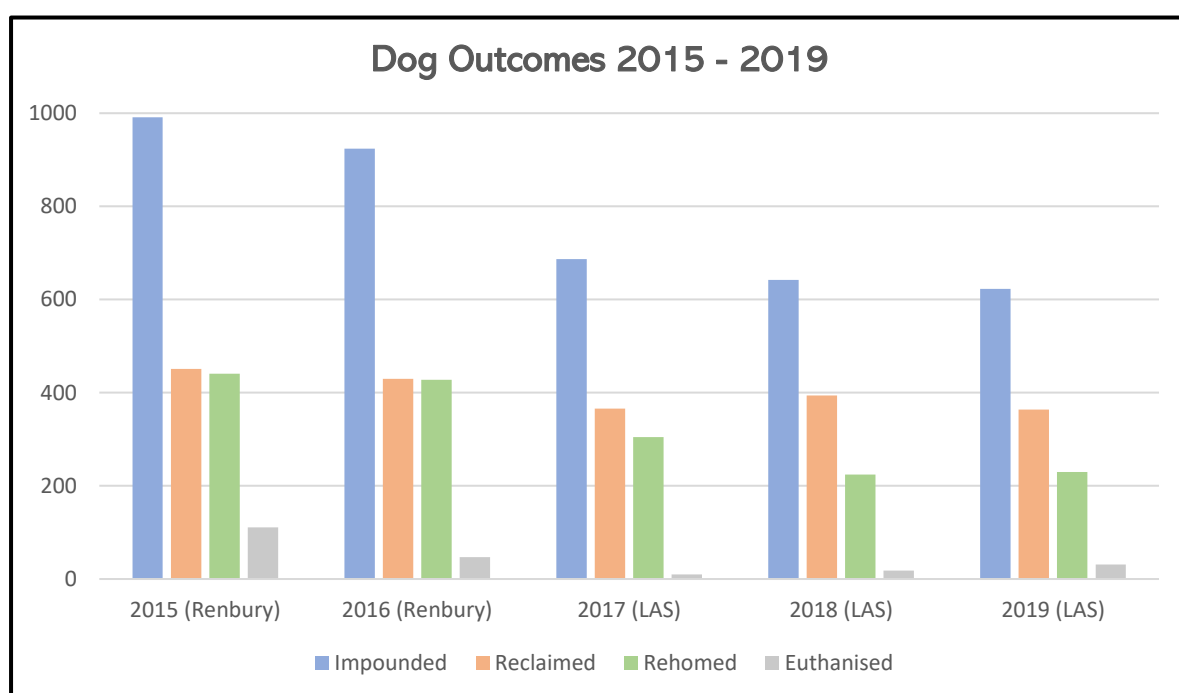
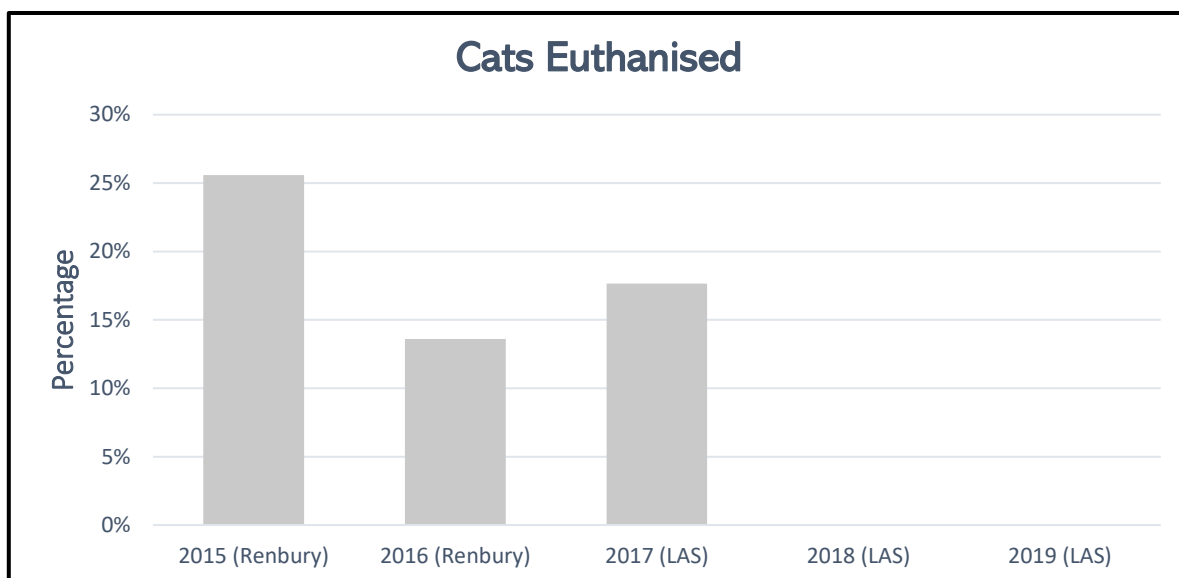


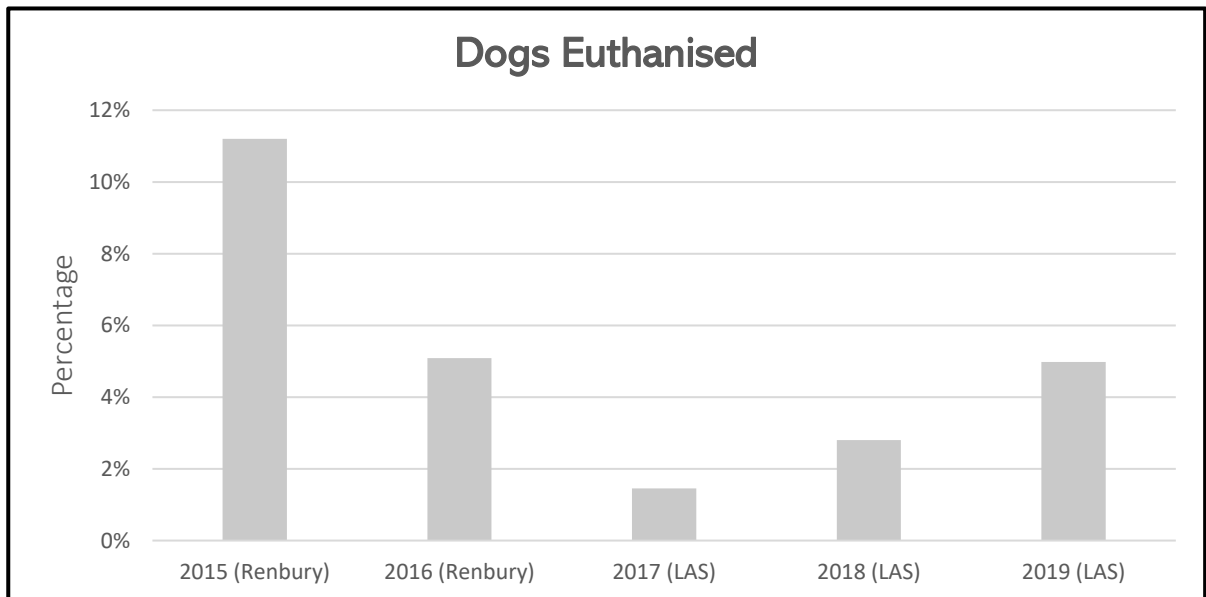
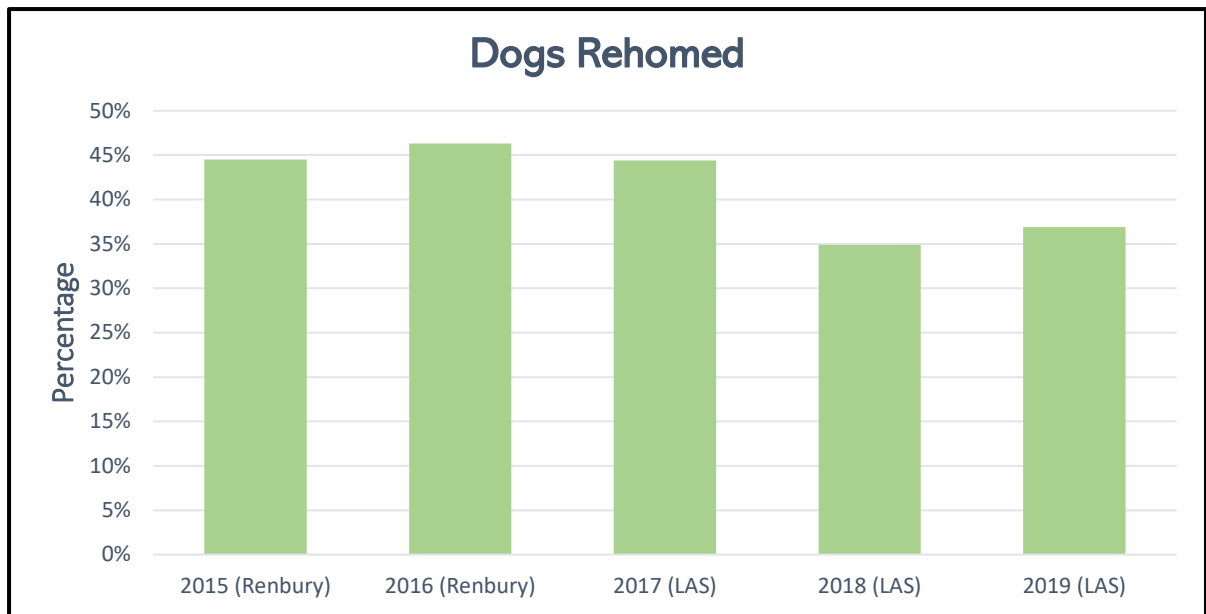
Appendices

Key Statistics

- Data from Liverpool Animal Shelter (LAS, previously Renbury) – 2015 - 2019
- RSPCA Yagoona data for 2019 calendar year







Cats arriving at RSPCA Yagoona from Liverpool City Council LGA (2019 Calendar Year)

Source	Cat	Kitten	Total
Stray	99	355	454
Owner Surrender	45	128	173
Humane Officer Seized	3	8	11
DOA - Stray	3	5	8
Euthanasia Request	1	3	4
Humane Officer Surrendered	4	2	6
DOA - Humane Officer Seized	1	1	2
Returns		1	1
Total	156	503	659

Suburb	Cat	Kitten	Total
LIVERPOOL NSW 2170	21	77	98
WARWICK FARM NSW 2170	13	65	78
CASULA NSW 2170	10	55	65
AUSTRAL NSW 2179	12	20	32
PRESTONS NSW 2170	5	27	32
MOOREBANK NSW 2170	3	27	30
CHIPPING NORTON NSW 2170	8	20	28
MOUNT PRITCHARD NSW 2170	7	21	28
HECKENBERG NSW 2168	8	19	27
LURNEA NSW 2170	4	22	26
BUSBY NSW 2168	6	19	25
HINCHINBROOK NSW 2168	6	18	24
GREEN VALLEY NSW 2168	2	17	19
MILLER NSW 2168	7	12	19
AUSTRAL NSW 2171		11	11
WEST HOXTON NSW 2171	5	6	11
CARTWRIGHT NSW 2168	2	7	9
HOXTON PARK NSW 2171	2	7	9
LEPPINGTON NSW 2171	4	5	9
ROSSMORE NSW 2557	1	6	7
ASHCROFT NSW 2168	4	2	6
HOLSWORTHY NSW 2173	1	4	5
SADLEIR NSW 2168	2	3	5
WATTLE GROVE NSW 2173	1	4	5
EDMONDSON PARK NSW 2171	3	1	4
CARNES HILL NSW 2171	2	1	3
MIDDLETON GRANGE NSW 2171		2	2
BRINGELLY NSW 2556	1		1
Other	16	25	41
Total	156	503	659

NB 5 of these cats were reclaimed, all adults (>1yr)