

Submission from the Cat Protection Society of NSW Inc to Fair Trading regarding draft strata schemes regulation

The Cat Protection Society of NSW Inc (“Cat Protection”) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the public consultation draft of the Strata Schemes Management Regulation 2016. We warmly welcome the changes proposed and support to the draft regulation.

The facilitation of pet-friendly accommodation will have benefits for communities, humans and companion animals.

The issue of pet-unfriendly accommodation has long been a concern for Cat Protection. As many as 20 per cent of the owned cats surrendered to us each year come from heartbroken families who have been unable to find pet-friendly accommodation. This creates a burden on already over-worked pounds and shelters and can result in healthy animals being put to sleep.

The proposed model by-laws will make a significant contribution to both human and animal welfare by allowing cherished pets to stay with their owners in loving, responsible homes.

Research shows there are significant health benefits for people with pets. People with pets have:

- lower levels of risk factors for cardiovascular disease
- fewer doctor visits
- better psychological health including less depression
- a buffer against grief and stress
- positive association with social contact and perceptions of neighbourhood friendliness (social capital)
- children who grow up with pets have better communication skills and are more empathetic.

Removing the barriers to pet ownership that strata by-laws have historically posed will allow a greater number of individuals and communities to enjoy these benefits.

According to the peak body Strata Community Australia NSW: “Strata is the fastest growing residential segment in New South Wales ... by 2032 more than 3 million people in NSW will live under a strata titles arrangement.” The proposed changes will ensure the potential health benefits of pet ownership are available to those people.

Responsible pet ownership need not clash with the demand to be a responsible neighbour or tenant and a prohibition on pet ownership in strata does not guarantee neighbourly behaviour. The proposed changes recognise this.

Cat Protection strongly supports the public consultation draft Strata Schemes Management Regulation 2016 because it will benefit communities, individuals and their pets.