

Barbara La Rocca, Robbie Walker and Jenny Weekes attended a meeting with Gold Coast City Council regarding the Breeder Permit Scheme being introduced by the council. The meeting was held at the Animal Welfare League and was also attended by Verrinder, representing the AWL. The aim of the meeting, from the council's perspective was to gain a better understanding of cat breeder issues in relation to the administration of the Breeder Permit scheme.

There are two departments involved at Gold Coast City Council level - the Animal Management Department, whose representatives were at the meeting and the Planning Department, who were not represented.

Under current Planning Dept regulations, a maximum of four breeding animals can be kept without a requirement for a planning application. Anything above that requires an application for a Kennel/Cattery licence, which requires full town planning application and approval. The likelihood of getting this number increased is not great, although in some areas, both within and outside of Qld the cut off point beyond which a Planning Application is required is nine breeding cats.

The maximum number of excess cats is currently four as well, but it is planned that in the near future Excess Animal Permits will be considered on a case by case basis with no maximum number of animals specified.

Animal Management are doing the Breeder Permit inspections along with the Excess Animal Permit inspections for the one fee of \$369. They are willing to classify breeding cats as active female breeding cats. Other cats, including studs, kittens that you are running on or have purchased as future breeding stock, or show cats, can be considered as pets and an excess animal permit. We explained that we often need to purchase or run on kittens before we desex our older breeding cats and that we would most likely not desex a breeding cat until we proved his/her successor in our breeding programme. So we are confident that they will approve most breeder permits where there up are to four active female breeding cats (and also some other cats not being currently bred from) provided they meet the requirement of the Breeders Code of Practice.

If the cats to be used for breeding changes over the 3 years of the permit, Council Animal Management Dept will only require a letter to change the details.

Gold Coast City Council is considering holding a focus group meeting next year, if there is interest in attending to clarify the above information. If cat breeders in the Gold Coast City Council area want concerns to be addressed, they need to be proactive and attend meetings if they are called. If we don't have a voice at these meetings then nothing will change.

What we need to recognise as residents of any council is that their by-laws are binding and enforceable and that financial penalties can apply if breeders fail to apply for a permit. Within the boundaries of the Gold Coast City Council, all cats are required by law to be registered, and all kittens microchipped and desexed prior to sale. The requirement for registration and microchipping is State law in Qld.

We know this will not satisfy all breeders and some people may have to make a decision as to whether to go down to four active breeding females or to apply for a change of purpose for their property.

However now that it has been clarified that there is flexibility in not including any stud males and up and coming breeding cats in the allowed four active breeding animals, as well as not putting harsh restrictions on retired cats and pet cats, registered breeders should be able to make application for a breeder permit. Having a breeder permit number means that you can promote to potential buyers, that you have been inspected and meet standards required in the Breeder Code of Practice.

The Gold Coast City Council wants caring, responsible registered cat breeders to apply for permits, so that they can then deal with unlicensed and uncontrolled breeding of kittens.