

# Manifesto for Cats



The Manifesto for Cats forms part of Cats Protection's advocacy work "Speaking up for cats", campaigning for change that will deliver a better world for cats.



## Cat breeding

Updating the law to control the breeding and sale of cats to reduce the number of unwanted kittens.



## Microchipping

Making it compulsory to microchip owned cats.



## Regulating air guns

Much stricter regulation on the ownership of air guns and crossbows to prevent injury or death to cats shot by such weapons.



## Dangerous dogs

Updating the Dangerous Dogs Act to allow prosecution of dog owners whose dogs attack, injure or kill cats.



## Animal welfare education

Inclusion of animal welfare in the National Curriculum so all children learn about responsible pet care.



## Cats & housing providers

Government recognition of the needs of people with cats or other companion animals in rented housing and care homes to allow people to keep their pets.



## Care and wellbeing

Government recognition of the benefits which cats and other companion animals bring to health and personal wellbeing when an individual's care needs are assessed.



## Labelling toxic products

Clear labelling of flowers, plants and household products that are toxic to cats so cat owners know which to avoid.



## Banning snares

An outright ban on the use of snares on the basis they are inhumane and cruel and inflict suffering, injury or death on animals caught in them (which includes cats).



## Illegal imports

Creating a national database to ensure that a central record is kept of all cats entering the UK legally so those entering illegally without a rabies vaccine can be identified without delay.

Cats Protection is the UK's leading feline welfare charity. Our focus is on controlling cat populations through neutering, reducing the number of stray and unwanted cats, rehoming cats and providing education and information about cat welfare. We are supported by over 9,000 volunteers who give their time by rescuing and rehoming strays, helping cats get neutered or speaking to schoolchildren and community groups about cat care. We have more than 250 volunteer-run branches, 31 adoption centres and 69 shops. Our vision is "a world where every cat is treated with kindness and an understanding of its needs".



## People care about cats

Cats are hugely popular pets providing love, affection and companionship. The most recent survey statistics show that 24 per cent of households have a cat – that's an estimated cat population of 10.5 million.<sup>1</sup> Cats Protection's national Facebook page has over 230,000 likes with around 10,000 people per day liking, commenting on and sharing our messages.

Animal welfare matters as a political issue – it affects the way people vote. A recent YouGov poll<sup>11</sup> asked voters to name issues that will determine how they will cast their vote. Fourteen per cent of those surveyed named animal welfare as such an issue. The General Election presents an opportunity for politicians to “Speak up for cats”.

### A Manifesto for Cats

There are many actions that Central Government, Local Government and MPs can do to ensure a better world for cats. The public are in constant touch with Cats Protection about issues of concern, whether it is cats being attacked and injured by dogs, landlords refusing to accept tenants with cats or cats being shot by air guns.

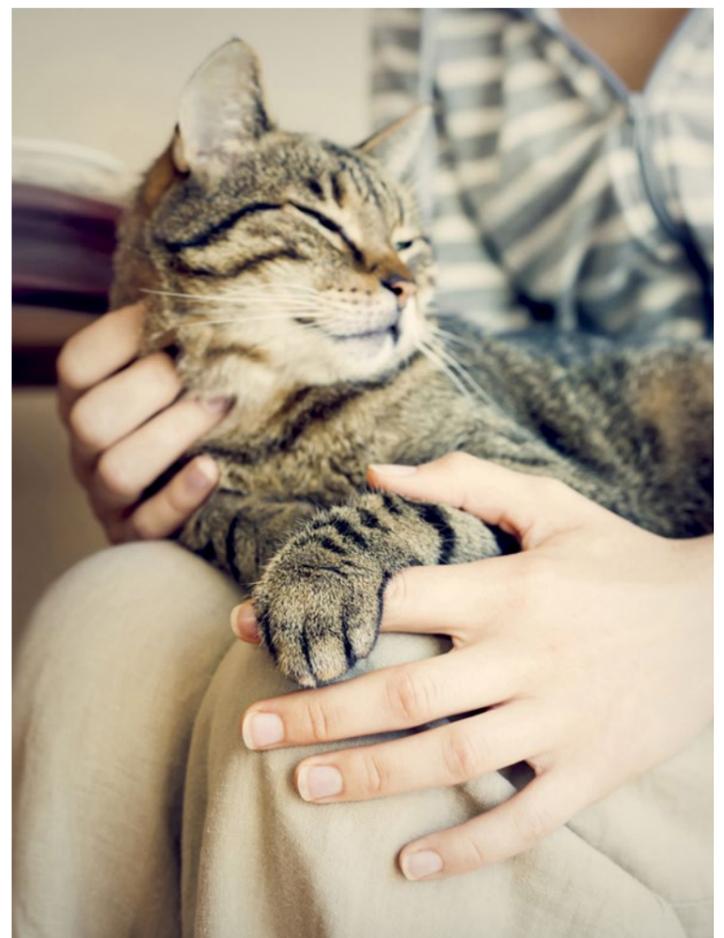
In summer 2014 over 2,500 people participated in our public consultation on the top 10 priority issues to be included in our Manifesto for Cats. There was widespread agreement about what is needed to improve cat welfare.



Over 93 per cent of those surveyed agreed with all 10 proposed manifesto issues.

“I wholeheartedly agree with all the proposals. I hope they are successful.”

- consultation respondent





## Breeding for sale: updating the law to control the breeding and sale of cats to reduce the number of unwanted kittens.

 **94.5%**  
of those  
surveyed  
agreed

### Hannah's story

Hannah saw an advert on a major online classified site selling kittens which suggested that the kittens were the offspring of the family pet. At the seller's house Hannah saw up to 15 kittens, all in the same room and huddled together in groups. Hannah chose two kittens, Simba and Deify, and asked where the mum cat was. Apparently, the mother cat belonged to a family member who lived at a different address. The seller said that Simba was part Bengal and Deify was part Ragdoll, that they were both eight weeks old and weaned. Hannah paid £360 for the two kittens.

When Hannah got home Deify was very poorly, kept vomiting and had diarrhoea. Hannah took both kittens to the vet immediately. The vet said that the kittens were likely to be younger than eight weeks, not weaned and were in poor condition. Deify was admitted to the vet's hospital and received critical care costing £2,000. It was touch and go but Deify did eventually recover.

At Cats Protection we know that there are more cats and kittens than there are loving homes. Thousands of cats and kittens are now advertised for sale online with compelling evidence of commercial breeding where the same advertisers are placing multiple successive adverts for litter after litter of different kittens. In 2013 the number of "unwanted litters" given up to our adoption centres across the UK increased by 19 per cent compared to 2012.

For many years Cats Protection volunteers and staff have been concerned about cats bred in poor welfare conditions, particularly by "hobby breeders" who are more motivated by money than welfare. We know of cases where kittens bred from the family pet are kept and sold in poor condition and before they are ready to leave their mum.

Cat breeding is unregulated in the UK. There are laws governing the breeding and sale of pets (Pet Animals Act 1951) but these are in urgent need of updating. There is good welfare practice among those that breed and register pedigree cats with bodies such as the Governing Council of the Cat Fancy.

Regulation of commercial cat breeding already exists in the Netherlands, Czech Republic, various US states and in New South Wales and Victoria, Australia.

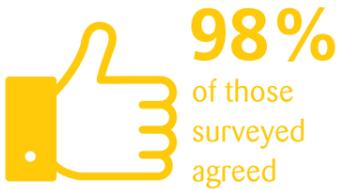
### Recommendations

- Regulation of commercial cat breeding would provide safeguards for cat welfare through the introduction of cat breeding licensing, welfare conditions and standards and an inspection process
- New regulations under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 to regulate the commercial breeding and sale of cats
- Government collaboration with animal welfare charities and professional bodies to develop mandatory training and accreditation for those that breed and sell cats commercially
- Updated regulations on pet vending to replace the Pet Animals Act 1951 including a ban on the sale of kittens in pet shops
- A Government review of UK and EU best practice and regulatory frameworks governing commercial cat breeding
- Strengthened reference in the Defra Code of Practice for the Welfare of Cats to the importance of neutering, including reference to the fact that there are no health benefits to a cat having one or more litters
- Government collaboration with animal welfare charities and professional organisations to develop a "kitten contract" to guide consumers





**Restrictions to control the use of air guns:**  
much stricter regulation of the ownership of air guns and crossbows to prevent injury or death to cats shot by such weapons.



**Billy's story**  
When Billy (pictured right) was found he had very serious injuries to his head in particular. He was severely dehydrated and wouldn't have survived for more than a day or two if he hadn't been treated straight away. When the vets at the National Cat Centre looked at Billy's X-rays they could see his whole body and head were peppered with airgun pellets. Four were quite clearly embedded into his skull. The vet who treated Billy initially removed one or two pellets from his neck but the others were so deeply embedded it was not possible to remove them. As a result Billy is totally blind in one eye and may only be able to see shadows with the other. It is remarkable Billy survived the attack and he must have been in agony for a number of days before he was found and taken to a vet.

On average nearly five cats a week in the UK are reported as having been shot with an air gun. Around 80 per cent of reports are in England.<sup>iii</sup>

Typically, pellets become lodged in the cat's body, its brain, eyes, spine or vital organs. Around 30 per cent of reported incidents are eventually fatal. A cat will often leave the scene and, as is normal cat behaviour, it will either crawl away to hide or die in a secluded spot. Many air gun injuries are not apparent to the cat owner and the delayed nature in detecting air gun pellets in cats makes it harder to establish when and where the shooting took place.

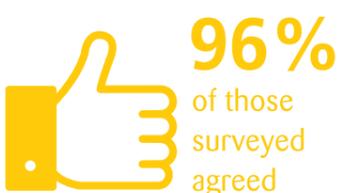
Where air guns are used randomly, casually or deliberately to inflict injuries on cats (and other animals) we are aware that the owners of those cats are often unable to proceed to prosecution under current law for reasons related to evidence. A stricter licensing scheme would restrict airgun licences to those that have legitimate reason for them. The Scottish administration is currently considering a stricter licensing regime for air weapons.<sup>iv</sup>

#### Recommendations

- Strengthened control of air guns to ensure that only those who can show a legitimate reason for owning and using an air gun can obtain a licence



**Cats entering the UK:**  
creating a national database to ensure that a central record is kept of all cats entering the UK legally so those entering illegally without a rabies vaccine can be identified without delay.



There was a 67 per cent<sup>v</sup> increase in the number of cats recorded as having entered the UK legally in 2012 under the new Pet Travel Scheme (PETS).<sup>vi</sup> PETS governs the non-commercial movement of pets. Cats Protection is concerned where kittens enter the country unchecked and/or illegally as this presents a potential public health risk as well as a risk to animal welfare. Just one cat or kitten smuggled in could put the UK at risk of a case of rabies or other infectious diseases.

In November 2013 a cat was identified in Paris as having rabies. Currently there is no centralised database recording all pet cats entering the country under the PETS scheme. Such a database would confirm that a cat had been checked, scanned for a microchip and had entered the country legally. Currently only animals that are declared get checked before entering the UK.

#### Recommendations

- Creation of a national database that registers details of all companion animals that have entered the country legitimately. The database should be linked to an EU database which is accessible across the EU to maximise traceability
- Government guidance for Local Authorities, trading standards officers, welfare charities etc on procedures to follow if a cat is suspected of being an illegal import (including specific guidance on when to quarantine)
- Random checking of cars and other vehicles to look for cats and dogs that are being smuggled into the UK



## Dog attacks on cats: updating the Dangerous Dogs Act to allow prosecution of dog owners whose dogs attack, injure or kill cats.



### Shinnie's story

A four-year-old boy had a lucky escape when two Lurcher dogs jumped over a fence into the back garden where he was playing and mauled the family's 18-year-old cat Shinnie to death in front of him. Danielle Brewster, the child's mother said "He is really shaken up. He doesn't want to play in the garden anymore."<sup>x</sup>

On average around 10 cats a month are reported in the press as having been the victim of a dog attack.<sup>vii</sup> That equates to over two attacks a week. Sadly 80 per cent of dog attacks on cats are reported as fatal. The vast majority of dog owners are responsible owners and keep their dogs under control. However, where an owner does fail to control their dog and the dog injures or kills a cat or other animal the law needs strengthening.

Recent amendments to laws on dangerous dogs have extended the law to cover dog attacks on assistance dogs but not dog attacks on other animals such as cats. An attack by a dog on a cat can denote a dangerous dog. Too frequently cases are reported where a fatal attack on a child was preceded by a prior attack on a cat. Current laws regarding dog attacks on cats are inadequate and successful prosecutions are hard to secure.

Prevention is always better than prosecution. Cats Protection was pleased to see specific reference to preventing dog attacks on cats within new Government guidance on the use of anti-social behaviour measures by the police and Local Authorities.<sup>viii</sup> The challenge now is to monitor the effective use of this guidance.

### Recommendations

- Creation of a new offence within existing or consolidated legislation to control dangerous dogs where a dog that is out of control attacks a cat or other "protected animal"<sup>ix</sup>
- Full use of preventative measures within new anti-social behaviour legislation to minimise dog attacks on cats and promote responsible dog ownership
- Government coordination of data evidencing dog attacks on cats and monitoring of the use by enforcers of preventative anti-social behaviour measures



## Animal welfare education: inclusion of animal welfare in the National Curriculum so all children learn about responsible pet care.



Children are the pet owners of tomorrow and it's essential that they leave school with a basic understanding of how to care for and respect animals. Developing an understanding in children of responsible pet ownership would result in an improvement in some of the animal welfare issues which impact on our society today, such as the increasing numbers of stray and abandoned cats and cruelty cases.

Education is a priority for Cats Protection. With the help of education volunteers we delivered 448 educational talks across the UK in 2013 to schools and community groups. Making animal welfare and the five welfare needs<sup>xi</sup> a mainstream topic included in the National Curriculum would help teachers to incorporate animal welfare within the school timetable. To help us reach marginal audiences Cats Protection would welcome joint working with Government and professional bodies to gain accreditation for our education resources.

### Recommendations

- Inclusion of animal welfare in the National Curriculum and recognition of the preventative impact of teaching animal welfare and responsible pet ownership to schoolchildren
- Government collaboration with professional bodies to endorse voluntary sector education resources
- MP support for Cats Protection's education activities locally

"Children are the future and teaching them about how to treat animals could lead to a society which understands animals better and could mean a decrease in cruelty cases."

- consultation respondent



## Cats and housing providers: Government recognition of the needs of people with cats or other companion animals in rented housing and care homes to be allowed to keep pets.



**96%**  
of those surveyed agreed

"...with more individuals being forced into renting and an ageing population who frequently find themselves in a rest or care home the government should be proactive and encourage landlords to allow responsible pet owners in their properties..."

- consultation respondent

More and more of us do not own the homes we live in. Many of us now have landlords or managers whether in privately rented, social or care home accommodation. Refusal by a landlord or care home to allow pets are two of the most common reasons cats are given up to Cats Protection for rehoming.

More needs to be done to encourage housing providers and landlords to have pet-friendly policies and pet tenancy clauses. According to one of the major online guides to care homes, nursing homes and residential homes, currently about 43 per cent say they take "pets by arrangement".<sup>xii</sup>

### Recommendations

- Government to encourage more social housing associations and private landlords to allow tenants to keep companion animals
- Government to encourage and promote good practice whereby local authorities, social housing associations and private landlords have pet friendly tenancy clauses
- Government to work closely with animal welfare charities to encourage more care homes and retirement complexes to allow new residents to have cats



## Banning snares: an outright ban on the use of snares on the basis they are inhumane and cruel and inflict suffering, injury or death on animals caught in them (which includes cats).



**99%**  
of those surveyed agreed

This manifesto item received the highest level of support during consultation. Many respondents were surprised to read that the use of snares was still legal.

Cats Protection supports a ban on the use of all types of snares across the UK on the basis that their use is inherently cruel and inhumane. Snares inflict indiscriminate suffering and injury on animals and cats are often the victims. Snares are commonly used by gamekeepers to protect game birds from predation and by farmers and other landholders. The "target species" are generally foxes and, to a lesser extent, rabbits. A Government report on snaring in England and Wales found that almost 30 per cent of rabbit snare users had caught a domestic cat in a snare at some point.<sup>xiii</sup>

There are alternatives to snares available to land managers for both rabbit and fox control, for example the use of various types of fencing (electric, buried and underground).

### Whiskers' and Shadow's stories

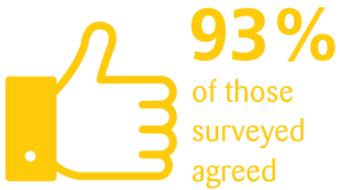
Pet owners in Armthorpe say they're extremely concerned after cats in the area were trapped and almost killed in rabbit snares. Whiskers was almost cut in two after being caught in a snare. Owner Claire Jones said "We found her bleeding and crying at the back door, my daughter was absolutely distraught". Mary Davies' cat Shadow, also in Armthorpe was caught in a snare and had to have his leg amputated. She said it was "heartbreaking".<sup>xiv</sup>

### Recommendations

- Government introduction of a total ban on the use of snares to end this inhumane practice



## Microchipping: making it compulsory to microchip owned cats



**93%**  
of those  
surveyed  
agreed

### Recommendations

- Regulations to introduce compulsory microchipping of owned cats
- A Government led review of EU and non-EU best practice in countries where microchipping of owned cats is already compulsory
- Strengthened reference to microchipping as the preferred permanent method of identifying cats within the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Cats in England when the code is next reviewed (2015)
- Collaboration with Government and MPs to promote the benefits of microchipping cats (including support for initiatives like National Microchipping Month every June)



## Labelling products toxic to cats: clear labelling of flowers, plants and household products that are toxic to cats so cat owners know which to avoid.



**97%**  
of those  
surveyed  
agreed

### Kelly's story

Kelly came home to find one of her cats collapsed on the floor. She rushed him to the vet where she was told that he had poisoning from lily pollen and he died half an hour later from kidney failure. Kelly said "I had no idea that lilies are so lethal to cats. My two young children and I have been devastated at the loss of our beloved cat all for a bunch of flowers."

Microchipping is the method of identification Cats Protection recommends for cats. Microchipping offers cats a safe and permanent method of identification. It increases the chances of a lost or injured cat being safely reunited with its owner. It can identify a cat that has been a victim of a road traffic accident.

In 2013 Cats Protection microchipped 36,000 cats. This is approximately 83 per cent of the cats we rehomed and cost the charity around £900,000. When we take an unchipped cat into our care it can be very difficult to trace an owner and may well result in us rehoming a cat needlessly.

Microchipping of cats is already compulsory in some countries, for example Spain and Belgium and in parts of Australia. Microchipping of dogs is already compulsory in Northern Ireland and will be compulsory in Wales (2015), England (2016) and it is being considered in Scotland for dogs.

### Floyd's story

Floyd (pictured below) was missing for nearly three years after his owner Jasmine Easey moved from Norfolk to Northamptonshire. Our Cherwell Branch in Oxfordshire was called by a lady in Croughton, five miles away, who had been looking after a stray cat. A vet scanned him for a microchip and discovered he belonged to Jasmine who was overjoyed to have him back.



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Cats are very susceptible to poisoning and a number of household products can be fatal to them. Many consumers, who are also cat owners, aren't aware of the toxicity of products such as disinfectants and weedkillers.

Labelling of toxic household products will be governed by the European Classification of Labelling and Packaging regulation from 1 June 2015. This regulation is aimed at protecting people and the environment. We'd like manufacturers to go beyond what is legally required and ensure product labels warn consumers of a product's toxicity to animals.

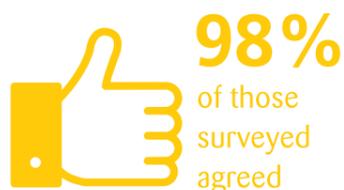
A number of plants – lilies in particular – can also be fatal. Despite years of effort from Cats Protection and the Cat Group<sup>xv</sup> many supermarkets still do not have accurately worded and prominent warnings on their lily bouquets. All parts of lilies, not just the pollen, are toxic to cats.

### Recommendations

- Government working with antifreeze manufacturers to encourage them to voluntarily place warnings on products and plants highlighting their toxicity to animals as well as to people
- Government encouragement to manufacturers of toxic products (eg antifreeze) to develop non-toxic alternatives
- Joint working with Government to raise public awareness about the toxicity of certain household products and plants



## Cats and their benefit to health and wellbeing: Government recognition of the benefits which cats and other companion animals bring to health and personal wellbeing when an individual's care needs are assessed.



"I have Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME) and it is because of my cats and their needs that I get out of bed every day. Without them I would have no reason to get up on some days and I would cave in to my condition"

- consultation respondent



## To find out more about the Manifesto for Cats and our advocacy work:

Visit [www.cats.org.uk/manifesto](http://www.cats.org.uk/manifesto)

Watch and share our YouTube video of volunteers and their cats

Follow @CPadvocacy and the #CatManifesto hashtag on Twitter

To contact us:  
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Reg Charity 203644 (England and Wales) and SC037711 (Scotland). COM\_830\_10/02/15

Cats can help alleviate social isolation and make particularly suitable companion animals for people with chronic health problems, limited mobility or who are housebound. Cats have also been proven to help reduce the risks of physical conditions such as cardiovascular disease.<sup>XVI</sup>

The Care Act 2014 places strong emphasis on supporting individual wellbeing within individual care. Cats Protection raised the issue of the value of cats and other pets to personal wellbeing when the Care Act was considered at Bill stage in the Lords.

We were delighted that the relationship between wellbeing and the unconditional love, affection and companionship pets provide was recognised by the Minister Earl Howe, House of Lords (July 2013).<sup>XVII</sup>

"Clause 1, the wellbeing clause, provides that local authorities, when exercising any function under Part 1 of the Bill, have a duty to promote the wellbeing of an individual. Wellbeing is composed of many aspects, including emotional wellbeing. A pet might be so important to an individual that their emotional wellbeing would depend in some way on their pet. If that is the case, a local authority will have to take it into consideration."

Now that the Care Act is in place it is vital that the role cats and other pets play in supporting individual wellbeing is not forgotten by those assessing an individual's care needs. We'd encourage imaginative initiatives such as Companion Animal Support programmes which already happen in Australia.<sup>XVIII</sup>

### Recommendations

- Government monitoring to ensure that assessments and personalised care plans include consideration of any companion animals that form part of the individual's household and that benefit wellbeing
- Government encouragement for integrated/pooled funding such as the Better Care Fund to financially support innovative schemes to improve wellbeing, such as companion animal support programmes
- Incorporation of prevention, improved wellbeing and social isolation measures into local health and wellbeing system wide plans. Public Health England and local Public Health departments should oversee these plans and report on impacts



### References

<sup>I</sup> PDSA Issues in Focus. December 2014 [www.pdsa.org.uk](http://www.pdsa.org.uk) <sup>II</sup> <https://d25d25065fb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus/uploads/document/150ymvzeao/YG-Archive-140201-WASP.pdf> <sup>III</sup> Statistics taken from Cats Protection monitoring of press reports and direct reports – 87 reports in 19 weeks (01/06/14 to 12/10/14). <sup>IV</sup> <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/78273.aspx> <sup>V</sup> Defra and Dogs Trust pers. communication <sup>VI</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/pet-travel-information-for-pet-owners> <sup>VII</sup> Cats Protection logging of reported attacks on cats by dogs between January and November 2014. <sup>VIII</sup> Defra (October 2014) "Dealing with irresponsible dog ownership: Practitioners Manual" [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/373429/dog-ownership-practitioners-manual-201411.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/373429/dog-ownership-practitioners-manual-201411.pdf) <sup>IX</sup> As defined in the Animal Welfare Act (2006) <sup>X</sup> *Hull Daily Mail*, September 2014 <sup>XI</sup> The Animal Welfare Act Section 9 2006 introduced a requirement for all people responsible for an animal to ensure that its welfare needs are met. They are: the need for a suitable environment, a suitable diet, the need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns, the need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals, the need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury, and disease <sup>XII</sup> [www.carehome.co.uk](http://www.carehome.co.uk) 8511 "pets by arrangement of 19,967 registered (December 2014) <sup>XIII</sup> Defra (2012) Determining the extent and use and humaneness of snares in England and Wales <sup>XIV</sup> *The Star* (Doncaster) February 2014. <sup>XV</sup> <http://www.thecatgroup.org.uk/> <sup>XVI</sup> Quereshi A I, Memon MZ, Vazquez G et al. (2009) Cat ownership and the risk of fatal cardiovascular diseases, results from the second national health and nutritional examination study mortality follow-up study. *Journal of vascular and interventional neurology*, Vol 2 No 1 Jan 2009 p132-135. <sup>XVII</sup> Hansard 3 July 2013 Column 1272 <sup>XVIII</sup> <http://www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/Services/Older-persons-services/home-and-support-services/Companion-Animal-Support-Program/>

