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**Survey on community attitudes to companion animal regulation, feral animal control and wildlife protection**

**Background**

At the Council meeting of 23 November 2010 the Council adopted the BMCC Wildlife Protection Area Policy and resolved to undertake a survey of community attitudes and concerns about wildlife protection, companion animal regulation and feral animal control in the Blue Mountains LGA.

The NSW *Companion Animals Act 1998* makes provision forCouncil to declare council managed lands as Wildlife Protection Areas (WPAs) for the purpose of excluding domestic cats and dogs to protect wildlife.The reduction in the presence of domestic animals has the benefit of reducing both the stress levels as well as the pressures of predation on wildlife that inhabits the declared land. The declaration of a WPA also provides options for enforcement of the exclusions under the Act.

It is initially proposed to trial 8 Wildlife Protection Areas. The establishment and regulation of WPAs by Council in the Blue Mountains LGA is currently unfunded. The resources needed to fund WPAs may require reallocation of resources from existing Environmental Management programs such as bush regeneration, track maintenance, environmental education, and Bushcare support programs.

**What will this survey be used for?**

The results of the survey will assist Council in several areas of management, such as:

1/ Introduction of trial Wildlife Protection Areas (WPAs);

2/ Review of Council’s Companion Animal Management Plan (currently on public exhibition);

3/ Understanding of community perceptions about the impacts of domestic and feral animals upon native wildlife in council’s bushland reserves and in the Blue Mountains National Park;

4/ Further development of community education programs to encourage responsible cat and dog ownership and wildlife protection.

This survey will provide an opportunity to gauge community opinion on WPAs and any associated increased companion animal regulation and/or feral animal control that may be required in these areas. In addition the survey will gauge the communities perceptions of the importance of companion and pest animal control compared with other environmental programs currently delivered by Council.

The survey will help inform discussion at a community forum to be held on Sunday 29th May exploring the issues of Wildlife Protection Areas, companion animal regulation, feral animal control and wildlife protection to be held in partnership with the World Heritage Institute and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (Blue Mountains Region)

**To participate in the survey**

Complete the survey online by visiting Council’s Blue Mountains Have Your Say website on <http://bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au/companionanimalsurvey>

or visit your local council offices, library or neighbourhood centre to complete a hard copy of the survey.

The survey will run from Wednesday 23rd March to Wednesday 20th April.

**Further reading** (available from BMCC website and/or BMCC libraries)

Companion Animals Management Plan (Cats and Dogs) 2008-2011

Draft Companion Animals Management Plan (Cats and Dogs) 2011-2014

Council meeting 23/11/2010 Business paper

Looking after the Environment Item 13 - Wildlife Protection Area Policy

Looking after the Environment Item 14- Feasibility of an Independent Community Survey

Council meeting 23/11/2010 Minute 526 and Minute 527

Blue Mountains Urban Fox Program resource package

**For further information**

Contact Michael Hensen (Biodiversity Conservation Officer) on mhensen@bmcc.nsw.gov.au or 4780 5471

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**Survey on community attitudes to companion animal regulation, feral animal control and wildlife protection**

**Please tick the relevant answer**

**Please answer each question**

**1. Where do you live in the Blue Mountains?**

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| --- |
| http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif Ward 1- Mount Tomah, Mount Wilson, Mount Irvine, Bell, Mt Victoria to Leura  http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gifWard 2- Wentworth Falls - Faulconbridge/Springwood  http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gifWard 3- Faulconbridge/Springwood - Valley Heights  http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gifWard 4 - Warrimoo – Lapstone |
|  |

**2. Do you own a companion animal in the Blue Mountains local government area?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif Dog  http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gifCat  http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gifDog & Cat  http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gifNeither  **3. Which situations do you perceive as being a significant threat to wildlife.**   |  | Yes | No | | --- | --- | --- | | Domestic cats allowed to roam outside during the day? | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | | Domestic cats allowed to roam outside at night? | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | | Domestic cats straying into bushland reserves? | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | | Domestic dogs on lead in bushland reserves? | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | | Domestic dogs off lead in bushland reserves | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | | Domestic dogs straying into bushland reserves? | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |   **4. In order to protect wildlife Council can declare council bushland reserves as Wildlife Protection Areas (WPA's). Which of the following WPA's would you support the declaration of in selected council bushland reserves.**   |  | Yes | Only if assessed as effective and affordable | No | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Category 1 Wildlife Protection Areas i.e. prohibiting cats and dogs? | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | | Category 2 Wildlife Protection Areas i.e. prohibiting cats but permitting dogs along major thoroughfares such as fire trails provided they are on leash? | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  |  |  | |  |  |  | |  |  |  | |  |  |  | |  |  |  | |  |  |  | |

**5. The voluntary cooperation of cat owners in the vicinity of a Wildlife Protection Area (WPA) e.g. in preventing their cats straying into the WPA would be critical to the success of the declaration of any WPA. If you lived in the vicinity (within 500m) of a WPA would you:**

|  | Yes | No | N/A |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Keep your cat indoors after dark | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| Install an outdoor cat enclosure | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| Keep your cat indoors at all times | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| Reassess whether it is appropriate to own a cat in such an area | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
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**6. The voluntary cooperation of dog owners in obeying the dog prohibited or dogs on leash rules would be critical to the success of the declaration of any WPA. If you are a dog owner and a WPA was declared in a reserve would you voluntarily comply with:**

|  | Yes | No | N/A |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| a ‘no dogs allowed’ directive in a WPA | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| a ‘dog on leash only’directive in a WPA (i.e. permitting dogs along major thoroughfares such as fire trails provided they are on leash) | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |

**7. The implementation, enforcement and monitoring of WPAs would be resource intensive and may need to be funded from council’s existing Environmental Management budget.**

|  | Yes | Priorities should be determined by Council expertise | No |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Would you support the reallocation of resources away from current Environmental Management programs such as Bushcare, Bush Regeneration and Track Maintenance? | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |

**8. Education Programs**

|  | Yes | No |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Would you support an environmental education program to promote responsible cat and dog ownership in the Blue Mountains LGA? | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |  |

**9. The NSW government is responsible for the introduction of laws pertaining to companion animal management. Under the Companion Animals Act (1998) Council ability to control cats is limited to requiring cats to be registered and managing ‘nuisance’ cats.**

|  | Yes | No |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Would you support council lobbying the NSW State government to strengthen the cat management regulations available under the Companion Animals Act to give council increased regulatory powers to manage cats e.g. the ability to detain and fine cats straying beyond their owner’s property boundaries or to the ability to impose a night time curfew on cats? | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |  |

**10. Which of the following pest animals have you seen in a council bushland reserve in the last 12 months?**

|  | Yes | No |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Foxes | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| Rabbits | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| Indian Mynas | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| Feral cats | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| Stray domestic cats | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| Feral dogs | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| Stray domestic dogs | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |

**11. Which of the following animals do you perceive as being a significant threat to wildlife in council’s bushland reserve system?**

|  | Yes | No |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Foxes | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| Rabbits | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |  |
| Indian Mynas | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| Feral cats | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| Stray domestic cats | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| Feral dogs | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| Stray domestic dogs | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |  |

**12. Effective pest animal control programs are resource intensive, ongoing and may need to be funded from council’s existing Environmental Management budget.**

|  | Yes | Priorities should be detemined by Council expertise | No |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Would you support the reallocation of resources away from existing Environmental Management programs such as Bushcare, Bush Regeneration and Track Maintenance to achieve a higher level of pest animal control in council’s bushland reserves? | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |

**13. Which of the following pest animals would you support BMCC developing a control program for in council’s bushland reserves?**

|  | Yes | Only if assessed as effective and affordable | No |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Foxes | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| Rabbits | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| Indian Mynas | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| Feral cats | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| Stray domestic cats | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| Feral dogs | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| Stray domestic dogs | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |

**14. Which of the following bushland management activities do you think should be given priority for funding in bushland reserves?**

|  | High Priority | Medium Priority | Low Priority | Not a Priority |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Bush regeneration and weed control | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| Bushcare support | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| Feral animal control | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| Track maintenance | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| Establishment of WPAs | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |
| Regulation of cats and dogs in reserves | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif | http://www.surveymonkey.com/i/t.gif |

Thank you for completing the survey. Please submit your completed survey to the relevant council office, library or mail to

Blue Mountains City Council

C/O Michael Hensen

Biodiversity Conservation Officer

Locked Bag 1005

Katoomba 2780