



## **DOCUMENT 16: Protecting Our Community Cats (2026)**

### **A Serious Update for Local Rescuers and Colony Feeders**

#### **The Situation:**

We know the pressure you are under. We know the SPCA and the big charities are increasingly saying "no" to the cats you are trying to help. This isn't a misunderstanding—it is a result of a major change in national policy.

#### **The Reality of the NCMG (National Cat Management Group):**

The SPCA, Companion Animals NZ, and the NZ Veterinary Association have formally partnered with **Predator Free NZ** and the **Department of Conservation (DOC)**.

- **The Policy Shift:** Because of this partnership, their priority has moved away from "Stray Welfare" and toward "National Eradication."
- **The "Owned" Technicality:** They are now using the **Animal Welfare Act** to claim that if you provide food, you are the legal "Owner." This allows them to refuse to take the cat into their shelters, leaving you with the full cost of vet bills and care.

#### **The Solution: Legal Residency and Property Rights**

With the government's new culling plans starting in **March 2026**, an unmanaged cat has no protection. To save the cats you feed, we must move faster than the contractors.

1. **The Microchip is the Only Shield:** Under the **Biosecurity Act**, a cat without a chip can be classified as "Feral" and culled. A cat with a chip is **Legal Property**. It is the only way to stop a contractor from legally removing a cat from your street.
2. **Collective Guardianship:** If the cost of desexing and chipping is too much for one person, we suggest "Community Ownership." By registering the chip to a local group or a pair of neighbours, you share the legal responsibility and the cost.
3. **Stability over Culling:** We know that removing cats causes a **Rat Surge** (where rodent numbers explode because the cats are gone). By keeping our community cats desexed and healthy, we keep our neighbourhoods stable and our birds safer than a "kill-trap" ever could.

**We are the only ones left standing for these animals. If the big organisations have walked away, the community must step up.**

Respect Life. Respect Nature. Restore the Balance.

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