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Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water

## **Bill gets the balance right and strengthens cat management**

The Tasmanian Liberal Government has significantly strengthened Tasmania's cat management arrangements through amendments which were passed by the Lower House today.

The Cat Management Amendment Bill 2019 delivers on recommendations of Tasmania's first comprehensive Cat Management Plan and addresses domestic, stray and feral cats.

The Bill recognises that we need to get the balance right and that cats, if not cared for in a responsible manner, can have serious impacts on the community, agriculture and wildlife.

While we encourage cat confinement, we will not make confinement compulsory. We have not supported the Green's amendment that would penalise owners thousands of dollars for letting their cat out, and burden owners with costs of new enclosures to keep their cats indoors.

Cat management is a shared responsibility and our focus is on education and creating community awareness of responsible cat management.

Key amendments contained within the amendment Bill include:

- Compulsory de-sexing and microchipping of cats from four months of age;
- Limiting to four, the maximum number of cats allowed to be kept at a property without a permit (breeders will be exempt);
- Improvements to better support landholders to control cats on their property;
- Replacing the State Government-registration of cat breeders with a permit system to breed cats;
- A requirement for all cats to be microchipped and de-sexed before being reclaimed from a cat management facility; and
- Removal of care agreements.

The Amendments are the result of extensive consultation with industry, local government, animal welfare groups, environmental and agriculture stakeholders through the Tasmanian Cat Management Reference Group and other processes.

This Bill strengthens cat management in Tasmania and it also gets the balance right.