



The Hon Ray Williams MP

Member for Castle Hill

Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier and Western Sydney

MEDIA RELEASE

30 March 2021

NEW LAW PROTECTS PETS IN CASTLE HILL FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

New laws will provide greater protections to domestic violence victim-survivors and their companion animals in the Castle Hill electorate.

Member for Castle Hill Ray Williams MP said the reforms passed NSW Parliament, commenced on 27 March, and will now offer further safeguards to victim-survivors and their pets.

“Domestic and family violence perpetrators are known to abuse animals to intimidate or control victims, threatening to hurt or kill pets to keep them in a relationship, or as punishment for leaving,” Mr Williams said.

“These reforms aim to help support victims in leaving a violent situation by giving them greater confidence that their beloved pets will be protected and perpetrators can be prosecuted.”

Amendments to the *Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007*:

- change the definition of ‘intimidation’ to indicate explicitly that harm to, or harm threatened to, animals is a form of intimidation (intimidation being an existing criminal offence with a maximum penalty of five years’ imprisonment); and
- prohibit harm to animals as a standard condition in all ADVOs and Apprehended Personal Violence Orders.

Attorney General and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence Mark Speakman said these reforms aim to help guard against this abhorrent form of domestic abuse.

“This cruelty from perpetrators can leave victims terrified of the consequences for their beloved animals and can therefore delay or prevent them from leaving a violent situation,” Mr Speakman said.

“These reforms seek to address those understandable fears by giving victims and their companion animals, greater protection via ADVOs.”

In addition, the NSW Government has invested \$500,000 in the [Pets and Animal Welfare Support \(PAWS\) Grants Program](#). The funds have been awarded to 19 women’s refuges and animal welfare organisations across NSW, enabling them to better support companion animals and victims escaping domestic violence.



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Hills Cat Rescue was one of the 19 successful recipients of the PAWS Grants Program, which received \$30,000 to increase capacity of cat shelter to provide no cost accommodation to DFV victims for their cats for as long as they need.

*For confidential advice, support and referrals related to domestic and family violence, contact: **1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)**, **The NSW Domestic Violence Line (1800 65 64 63)** or **Men's Referral Service (1300 766 491)**.*

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MEDIA: June Belkovskis – 02 8882 9555