

What to do if you find a cat



There are several things you should do before taking them to a shelter – the cat may not be stray, but simply lost or out exploring.



1. Establish if the cat is owned

In NSW cats are allowed to roam away from their owner's home, hence this cat might just be out for a stroll.

Doorknock around your immediate neighbourhood with a picture of the cat. Ask neighbours if they know where the cat lives. Make sure to check with anyone who's new to the area – their cat may have escaped in the move and become disoriented.

Try to fit the cat with a paper collar with your phone number for an owner to call you.

↓ [Download paper collar template](#)

⚠ If the cat is sick, injured, or too young to be on their own, take them to a veterinary hospital as soon as possible.

2. Distribute posters

Put up posters and distribute flyers to your neighbours in a 5-10 house radius. Pet cats can roam up to 2km, but most lost cats are found within 500m of their home. Include the following:

- 🐾 Found cat
- 🐾 A photo of the cat
- 🐾 Your phone number
- 🐾 And any unique features

People driving past have 5 seconds to read it, so 5 words max. Another option is to write a simple message on your car back window.

↓ [Download poster template](#)

3. Check lost and found pages

Utilise local lost and found and community web and social media sites to list the found cat along with a photo, and to check if an owner has posted a lost report. For example:

lostpetfinders.com.au

4. Check with council, local vets and shelters

Report the cat as found and check for any reports of lost cats. Your local vet or council can also check whether the cat has a microchip and is registered.

The law in your area may require taking the cat to the local council pound/shelter for the mandatory stray holding period. Rather than just handing the cat over, consider doing the following:

- ☑ Leave your number as a person to be contacted as a potential adopter.
- ☑ Keep looking for the owner.
- ☑ Check how long the animal will be held at the pound and stay in touch to see if the cat has been reclaimed or is still being held.
- ☑ Before the due out date, remind the pound that you are interested in helping by adopting and/or desexing the animal.

Cats are not reclaimed or adopted as readily as dogs, so they need our help.

5. Repeat all above steps

Cats are often lost for weeks or months before they are found.



6. Consider adoption

If the cat does not have a microchip and you have tried all of the above strategies and cannot find an owner, consider whether you or someone you know could give this cat a safe and permanent home.

⚠ Remember to get them desexed, microchipped and registered as soon as possible.

7. Surrender

Only after you have tried all of the above strategies and if you cannot keep them or find them another home should you consider surrendering the cat to a shelter or rescue group with a good rehoming record.

These groups are often overwhelmed with cats and kittens and may have a waiting list, so if you can desex and foster the cat while waiting please do so. This can prevent an unwanted litter and reduce the cat's time in a shelter.

When you find the cat's home

Thank and share your happy news with neighbours, vets, and businesses.

- ✔ Take down posters.
- ✔ Share the strategies you've learned with others to help them find their cats.
- ✔ Help the owners to prevent losing their cat again. Encourage them to:
 - 🐾 Update their microchip details.
 - 🐾 Fit an elasticized collar with a phone number.
 - 🐾 Desex their cat (desexed cats are more likely to be found than undesexed cats)
 - 🐾 Prevent their cat from roaming away from home in future



Visit our website for more information, encouragement, inspiration, and to sign up to our community of cat lovers keeping their cats safe at home.

rspcansw.org.au/keeping-cats-safe

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