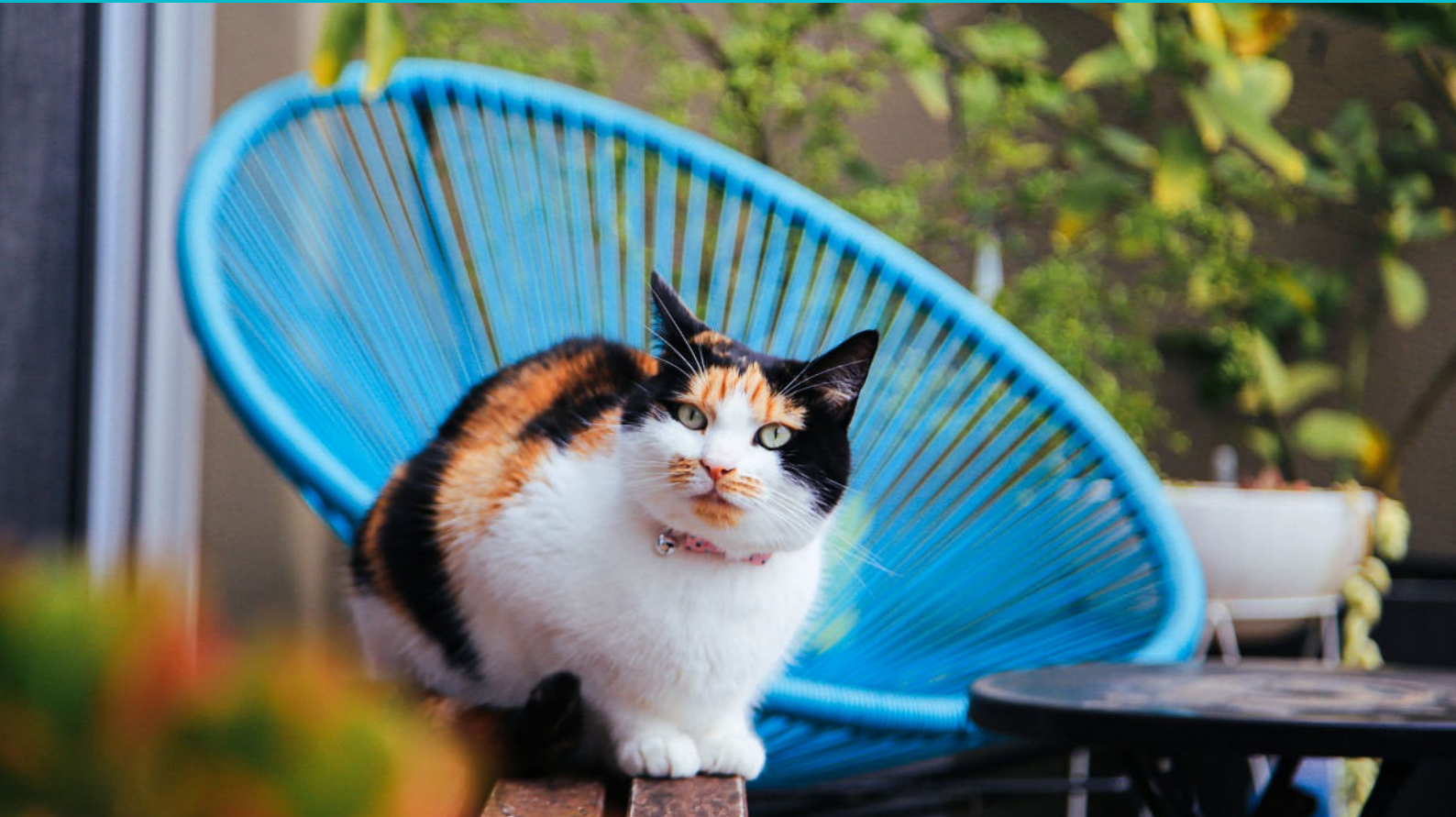




How to talk to your neighbour about their cat



Cats are wonderful companions for many people. Nonetheless having a neighbour's cat visit your property can be frustrating. Cats can use your garden or sandpit as their toilet, they can frighten or harm wildlife, and they can bother your own animals. Follow these steps to work constructively with your neighbour to find a solution that works for everyone.

1. Communicate with your neighbour

The best first step is to talk to your neighbour. Keep it friendly and positive. Don't assume your neighbour is aware their cat is visiting you – often they are not. Remember, for your neighbour, their cat is a loved and valued member of their family. Listen to what your neighbour has to say; when we all feel heard and understood it is easier to work together.

Talk about the practical aspects of the problem, how it affects you, and what can be done to find a solution. Be specific and non-judgemental, show you care about your neighbour and their cat. You could try saying:

*"I've noticed **[cat's name]** has been visiting my yard most mornings.*

*I have seen him **[going to the toilet in my vegetable garden/stalking birds around my birdbath/damaging my outdoor furniture/eating my cat's food]**.*

*This is frustrating for me because **[I'm trying to grow vegetables to eat/I'm trying to attract wildlife to my garden/it is making my own cat stressed]**.*

Can we work together to prevent him from visiting my yard?"

You could also suggest your neighbour visit [our website](#) for more information about how to transition their cat to a safe-at-home lifestyle, or print out some of our handouts to share.

If you can reach some agreement with your neighbour, you may want to write it down so that you each know what is expected of the other and by when it is expected. Make sure you each have a copy and let your neighbour know if you run into difficulties. Keep the lines of communication open.



2. Focus on what you can change

If your neighbour is not willing to change, try to agree on some actions you can take.

Natural deterrents

You could suggest the use of natural deterrents to prevent your neighbour's cat from entering your property. For example, cats don't like citrus smells (orange, lemon peels), coffee grounds, or cayenne pepper. Alternatively, you could strategically use water sprinklers to make your property less inviting, since most cats do not like getting wet.

Note it is important to consult with your neighbour before making any decisions that might affect them, including the use of deterrents, and always consider the welfare of the cat. Deterrents that might frighten or harm the cat are never appropriate.



Current legislation

Keep a record of all communications you have regarding the issue and if the problem continues, contact your local council. Under the *Companion Animals Act 1998 (NSW)* a cat is considered a nuisance if:

- 🌿 the cat makes persistent, excessive noise that reasonably interferes with the peace, comfort, or convenience of any person on any other premises;
- 🌿 or repeatedly damages anything outside the property on which it is ordinarily kept.

Cats are allowed to roam in NSW under existing legislation. Hence, there might not be much your council can do to assist.

Mediation

If the problem continues, consider contacting a free Conflict Resolution Centre for assistance in preventing and managing neighbour disputes. Visit crs.org.au for more information.