

## **PRESS STATEMENT**

### **DISCONTINUATION OF THE STRAY CAT REHABILITATION SCHEME (SCRS) IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES**

AVA has reviewed the Stray Cat Rehabilitation Scheme (SCRS) in consultation with the Town Councils. Stray animal control is one aspect of environment management, which Town Councils are responsible for in public housing estates. Town Councils are also familiar with the community's views towards stray cats.

The SCRS was established in 1998 as a voluntary community-based scheme. It was supposed to control the population of stray cats.

AVA has met with the 16 Town Councils to obtain their feedback on their experience with the SCRS. Unfortunately, the SCRS did not resolve the problem of strays in their estates. Some of the problems encountered by the Town Councils include:

- a) food left behind by feeders has led to pest problems;
- b) cat defaecation in common areas dirtied the environment;
- c) Town Councils have had to clean up food and cat wastes;
- d) number of stray cats and complaints about cats has not been reduced, and in some areas, actually increased.

In view of the above, the current SCRS will not be continued. We cannot sanction the addition of more strays into public areas. Town Councils will, however, avoid culling the existing sterilised strays, unless these cats are a nuisance or are found around food areas.

AVA is strengthening its public education programme on responsible pet ownership to minimise the stray problem and abandonment of pets. For instance, AVA will work with Town Councils and community centres to reach out to all residents on responsible pet ownership, and on how they can help to reduce the stray animals in public areas. This will include re-housing the strays in pet boarding facilities; refraining from abandoning unwanted cats or kittens; sterilising all pet cats to reduce unwanted kittens; and refraining from feeding cats in public places.

AVA has met and discussed this with the animal welfare groups. We hope that the animal welfare groups will continue to work with AVA, especially in public education for responsible pet ownership and re-housing of stray cats.

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