



MEDIA RELEASE

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ENVIRONMENTAL THEATRE HITS THE STAGE WITH PET CATS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

A south-coast theatre group is tackling environmental issues in an educational play for primary school-aged children, focusing on biodiversity and the domestic cat.

The creative directors at the Eaton Gorge Theatre Company (EGTC) are behind the production of *It's Cat's Play - A Catastrophic Story*, a stage show about cats.

Juliet Scrine and Ian McColm have written and performed the show that challenges pet owners to modify current pet practices.

The live show, video, and learning activities explore the ways the domestic cat negatively impacts the local wildlife and biodiversity.

They also linked the play to educational resources for teachers to access free of charge from the Distance And Rural Technology (DART) Learning website. The lessons are aligned with the Australian Curriculum Outcomes for kindergarten to year six students.

Using the arts to deliver this important message about environmental action is "fun, warm and non-judgemental," Juliet said.

"The play is not anti-cat, however, it's about responsible cat ownership, and by keeping their cats contained owners can make a huge difference to native wildlife," she said.

"We like to get the children to laugh, so we give them something to laugh at and then we give them something to think about - kids love facts.

"It is a really great way to reach a variety of people and different audiences," she said.

For each production, the directors adapt the storyline by using a threatened species common to the area. In a live performance, the young audience participates in the role of a vulnerable bird, reptile or a mammal challenging them to connect with the story-telling.

"It's really good at creating empathy and understanding," Juliet said.

It is hoped that the children will start a conversation with their parents or any adult about the way cats negatively impact Australian animals and the benefits of keeping cats indoors.

The play premiered in Goulburn earlier this year and will now be showing around schools in the southern region, including the Upper Lachlan, Blayney and Cowra.

Media enquiries

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According to the Threatened Species Recovery Hub, the total pet cat population is 3.8 million. Of these, around 1.1 million are contained while 2.8 million pet cats are able to roam and hunt, and are a major threat to the wildlife in their local areas.

Cats are a leading reason why populations of at least 123 threatened native species are declining.

For over fifteen years, the EGTC has been working alongside organisations to promote conservation messages about endangered species, habitat loss, water conservation, and the impact of waste on the environment.

This performance is a collaboration of the EGTC with the K2W Glideways Petaurus Connections, a co-funded Saving our Species program by the NSW Government and the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife. The program is an educational aid to promote responsible pet ownership for the protection of native wildlife and fauna.

[Follow this link for learning resources](#) - It's Cat's Play series via the DART Learning website

[Follow this link for further educational resources](#) - Wildlife corridors for kids factsheets and activities via the K2W Glideways website

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